THE EMERALD OF THE INCAS



CHARLES NORMAND



Class PZ8

Book .1N78E

Copyright No.

COPYRIGHT DEPOSIT.

THE EMERALD OF THE INCAS

THE EMERALD OF THE INCAS

A STORY OF THE PERUVIAN SIERRAS

BY

CHARLES NORMAND

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH BY S. A. B. HARVEY

ILLUSTRATED BY L. H. SMITH AND S. B. KITE



NEW YORK
DUFFIELD & COMPANY
1917

PZ8
.1
.N78
E

Copyright, 1917, by
DUFFIELD & Co.

NOV -1 1917

©CLA476887

CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
I.	The Adventures of a Night-Watchman	3
II.	A Disagreeable Excursion	10
III.	"Long Live the Inca Papa-Capac!"	17
IV.	"Find the Emerald!" . .	28
V.	The Abduction of Candida	41
VI.	The Señora's Army . . .	51
VII.	Lost in the Snows of the Crucero	63
VIII.	Inca or God-Father . .	73
IX.	The Anger of Inti-Churi .	93
X.	The Inca's Confession . .	100
XI.	The Battle of the Plaza-Manor	106
XII.	The Miraculous Escape of Si-Sing	119
XIII.	Si-Sing as Chef de Cuisine	130
XIV.	A Chinaman Among the "Rabonas"	138

CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
XV.	In Which We Again See Candida	145
XVI.	Si-Sing Meets Señora Bustamente	153
XVII.	At the Entrance to the "Holy Quebrada" . . .	159
XVIII.	The Soul of Manco-Capac	164
XIX.	The Eve of the Sacrifice .	169
XX.	Poor Candida!	178
XXI.	Rescued by Papa-Capac .	187
XXII.	The Mysterious Stairway	192
XXIII.	The Subterranean Temple and the Sacred Emerald	197
XXIV.	The Supreme Expiation .	203
	Epilogue	212

ILLUSTRATIONS

TWO YOUNG GIRLS FROM AMONG THE PRIESTESSES OF THE SUN MODESTLY ADVANCED . . . . . *Frontispiece*

IT WAS NO LONGER THERE—THE UMBRELLA HAD DISAPPEARED . . . . . *Facing p.* 8

IT WAS AN ANCIENT WAR OF RACES THAT WAS BEING FOUGHT OUT ON THIS SECLUDED BATTLEFIELD . . . " 112

ON! ON! THROUGH THE WILD AND UNKNOWN REGION THE CONDOR HAS NEVER QUITTED THE HEAD OF THE COLUMN . . . . . " 170

INTOXICATED WITH JOY, PAPA-CAPAC SEIZED THE JEWEL WITH A CRY OF TRIUMPH . . . . . " 204

SOON A BEAM WAS THROWN ACROSS THE CHASM, AND A ROPE SUSPENDED FROM IT . . . . . " 208

THE EMERALD OF THE INCAS

THE EMERALD OF THE INCAS

CHAPTER I

THE ADVENTURES OF A NIGHT-WATCHMAN

It was ten o'clock at night. The village of Tarayaqui, situated at a height of nine thousand feet in the Peruvian Andes, seemed plunged in deep sleep, as Si-Sing the Chinaman stood for a moment on the threshold of his cabin, prepared to start on his usual nightly rounds.

At the time of our story, Si-Sing occupied the position and discharged the duties of a Superintendent or Manager. He was employed, under the direction of the Engineer, Colonel Bustamente (who was absent at the moment), in overseeing the workmen who were labouring on the construction of a railroad that was to run from Puno on Lake Titicaca, through Tarayaqui, to Cuzco, the ancient Capital of Peru before the Spanish Conquest.

The task laid upon Si-Sing was by no means an easy one. The men working on the road formed a restless, mutinous population, much fonder of drink than of work, and were, moreover, of different and antagonistic nationalities. About one-third were Chinese Coolies, hired at Macao by the Peruvian government. The remainder were native Indians, recruited in the Sierras by the blows of the local authorities. The Chinese detested the Indians, and the Indians hated the Chinese. As for Si-Sing, in his capacity of Superintendent, he was execrated equally by both races, whom he scourged and oppressed with strict impartiality!

He was a typical Chinaman of about thirty; round as an apple, and yellow as a pat of butter. In accordance with his Chinese ideas of dignity, he never stirred out of his home without having in his hand an enormous red umbrella, and on his nose a pair of large spectacles, rimmed with copper. This evening he carried in addition a lantern, made in Chinese fashion of oiled paper, inside of which a tallow candle burned dimly.

The business of a night-watchman is at no time a cheerful one; but Si-Sing, as he stepped into the street, thought it had never seemed less enjoyable. Every light in the village had disappeared, and so had the stars; great flakes of snow,—as yet but few in number,—floated wandering through the air, like the scouts that precede the great battalions; and an icy wind, coming down from the "*cerros*" or mountain summits, brought tears to his eyes, as it pinched and nipped his fat cheeks.

For a second he hesitated,—but it was only for a second. It was so delightful and warm under the bed coverings of soft llama's wool which he had just left, and which still kept the shape of his plump person! . . . But he had a timely recollection that, if the Señor Bustamente was absent, his wife was still in Tarayaqui; and everyone about the yard and the shops knew that, under the Señora's administration, a neglect of duty,—no matter how slight,—would not be viewed as a jest!

Si-Sing had, like the celebrated "*Panurge*," a

strong, natural distaste for corporeal punishment. And a wholesome dread of the chastisement which he himself dealt out so liberally to others, proved stronger than his love of comfort, and so, making the best of a disagreeable necessity, he started out.

Nobody was to be seen. All the taverns, or "*pulperias*" in the village,—and they were not few,—were closed. Not a glimmer of light filtered through the cracks of their mud walls. It was evident that his orders regulating the drinking-places had been rigourously obeyed. In the vicinity of the church there was the same quiet, the same silence. In the barracks erected around the square, under the shadow of the belfry, his compatriots lay snoring, and dreaming of the "Yellow River," or the "Blue River" of China . . . there was nothing here to disturb the public tranquility.

It is true that in turning somewhat carelessly a sharp corner of the street which led towards the Indian quarter, Si-Sing caught his feet in a rope which had been cleverly stretched across the path

on a level with the ground,—and as a consequence fell headlong into a filthy pool just beyond. He rose anathematizing the name of "*Buddha*,"—but, beyond this, considered it an incident not worth his notice.

The Chinese Coolies had accustomed him to this sort of petty revenge, which accorded so well with their national character. Si-Sing had little fear of his own countrymen, knowing the small likelihood of any open revolt among them.

His fears were all reserved for the Indians, and his visit to their encampment was the portion of his daily round, which he made with the most reluctance.

His position of overseer had aroused many bitter feelings towards him, and in the usually sad, vacant eyes of the Indians whom he lashed and ill-treated, he had more than once caught gleams of menace.

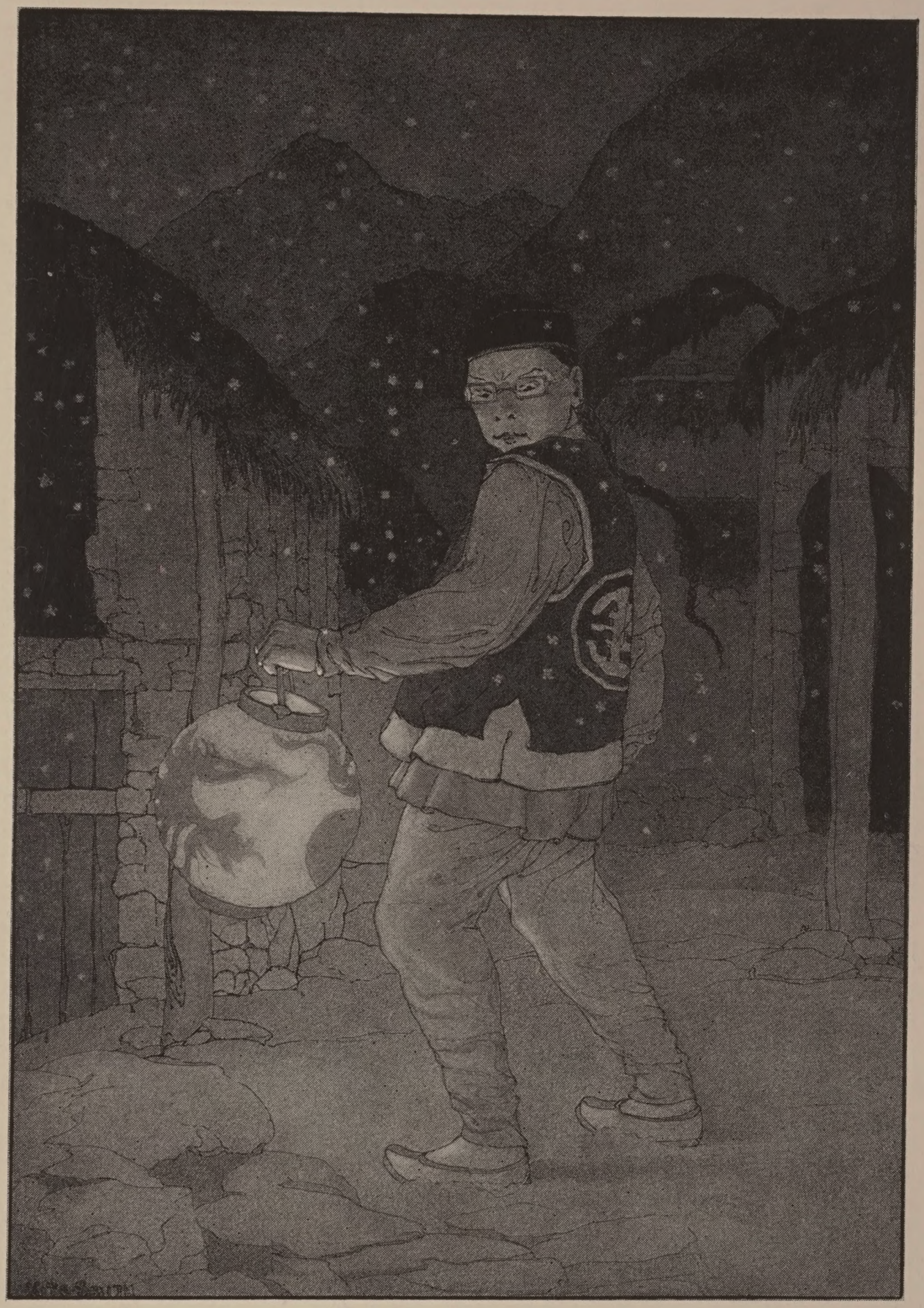
He was thinking of this, as he slowly pursued his way towards the lower end of the village. It was there, that, huddled together, the native workmen had their miserable dwellings. It was,

moreover, through this section that the railroad was to pass, and everything in the locality favoured an ambush. Building materials, lying here and there in confusion, offered safe hiding-places, and all traces of crime could be easily disposed of in the rapid torrent that roared in the bottom of the valley.

Nothing, however, seemed at present to justify the apprehensions of Si-Sing. His arrival found the wretched "*pascañas*," or reed huts of the Indians as silent as those of the upper village. Not one of the men sleeping there, wrapped in darkness, stirred; and there was something so extraordinary in the uncanny stillness that Si-Sing felt disturbed.

This was certainly not the first time that he had made a similar excursion at night. But never had the impression, produced by the late hour and the solitude, been so profound.

He stopped, holding his lantern in front of him, its feeble light making a bright spot on the darkness around. And, as for the moment his umbrella seemed an encumbrance, he laid it to



IT WAS NO LONGER THERE—THE UMBRELLA HAD DISAPPEARED

one side, leaning it against a pile of timber which happened to be there.

He felt anxious,—he knew not why; his heart palpitated with a vague fear and presentiment of danger. . . . He listened. Not a sound was to be heard . . . not a whisper . . . not a breath!

What a strange thing! . . . all those Indians lying there in the huts as if dead!

But when, having resolved to proceed on his way, he turned to resume his umbrella, it was no longer there . . . *the umbrella had disappeared.*

CHAPTER II

A DISAGREEABLE EXCURSION

ALTHOUGH Asiatics are not supposed to possess nerves of extraordinary sensitiveness, the shock so affected Si-Sing that he was compelled to lean against the timbers to keep from falling.

That an umbrella should disappear in an assembly of men, some of whom have forgotten to bring their own,—is an incident which annoys,—but does not occasion surprise . . . But that one should be appropriated here, where there was apparently nobody to take it,—seemed like the work of sorcery!

"*The Impossible is always the Possible*," said the great Confucius; and Si-Sing, so mysteriously deprived of the article which he carried about with him everywhere, and upon all occasions, was obliged to admit that the wisest of Chinese philosophers was quite right.

But the same Confucius,—the infallible Con-

fucius,—also said: "*Misfortunes come not alone; they are like the Tunny-fish who travel through the canal of Fo-Kien,—they always go in shoals;*" and his countryman Si-Sing was to learn that this time also the Sage was not mistaken.

In the somewhat vain hope that his umbrella might have fallen onto the ground, he set down his lantern, and stooped to search for it; when he rose *the lantern also had disappeared.*

Oh! . . . this time the Chinaman *was* frightened! His legs shook like those of a horse brought up to the brink of a precipice, and in spite of the wind and snow that was cutting his face, the sweat trickled down his plump cheeks.

He recalled the stories of Evil Spirits, with which Chinese mythology is filled,—spirits who delight in misleading and persecuting unfortunate mortals.

What a frightful situation to be in! Lost and helpless on this stormy night! He dared not move; and his heart thumped in his breast like a drum. So terrified was he that he lost all

sense of his whereabouts, and could not even remember in which direction lay the village.

He stood thus for some minutes, unable to act or think. At last he recollected that he had with him a flask of brandy, as a protection against the cold. He seized it with a shaking hand, and raised it towards his trembling lips. But what he was destined to drink upon this occasion would never harm his delicate stomach; the flask had not reached his mouth when it glided from between his fingers, though nothing indicated the presence of any one near. . . . Like the umbrella and the lantern, *the flask had disappeared!*

This was too much! And a stronger brain than Si-Sing's might well have reeled in bewilderment. Overcome by terror,—in darkness which seemed each moment to increase, surrounded by invisible tormentors, who revealed their presence only by their malicious tricks,—the Chinese was ready to give up and cry like a lost child,—when, all at once, he perceived. . . . Oh, joy! . . . Oh, happiness! . . . his *lantern*,

—his *own lantern!*—burning brightly about ten feet away, on a pile of stones, to which it seemed to have transported itself. Si-Sing was one of those to whom light gives courage. With more confidence than one would have expected under the circumstances, he ran towards the lantern. He was quite near,—had almost reached it,—and seized it,—when it escaped, and perched a few yards further on. He ran after it. The lantern waited for him, then, hopping on, like a sparrow that is looking for food in the snow, it again lighted just beyond his reach. He ran faster. . . . It flew faster; it darted on; it stopped, again and again, as if to mock him; and, try as he would, he was unable to capture it.

What an inconceivable mystery! Who ever heard of lanterns running about at night without the assistance of their owners? . . . One must come to Peru to witness such marvels!

Si-Sing reflected upon the miracle till his brain was ready to burst, without approaching a solution of the problem.

He would have done better to give his atten-

tion to his feet. So enraged was he at seeing himself trifled with by the bewitched lantern, that he rushed blindly on through the darkness, and all at once, while reaching out to grasp it for the twentieth time, he felt the earth give way beneath him.

Without being aware of it he had reached the brink of a cut through which the railroad passed, and down he went, turning over and over, like a barrel that is being rolled into a cellar, and reached the bottom with a thump.

The bank of snow on which he had fallen was too deep and soft to cause him the least injury, and he found himself quite unhurt. But his misfortunes were far from ended, and this memorable night was destined to form an epoch in his history.

Scarcely had he scrambled to his feet when a powerful hand caught him by the superb queue of braided hair, which hung down nearly to his calves, and another was clapped over his mouth to smother his cries, while a third quickly relieved him of his spectacles.

Then two men, whom he could not see, but whom he recognized as Indians from their characteristic odour, grasped him, and lifting him to their shoulders, ran off at top speed, carrying him as they do dead bodies in the Sierras.

He was so amazed and terrified that he attempted no resistance, but, like a true Chinaman, prepared to resign himself to the fate which seemed inevitable. Indeed, it was almost a relief to find that he had to do with human beings, and not demons!

The Indians ran like the wind through the snow and the darkness. Their pace was so fleet that the victim could hardly get his breath. As for attempting to notice the direction they were taking,—it was quite out of the question.

Sometimes his bearers, who were followed by a troop of galloping Indians, seemed to be descending into the depths of ravines, so precipitate was their course, and so inclined their bodies; at other times from their slackened speed, and the uplifted arms of the man at the rear, the Chinese guessed that they were climbing the abrupt sides of a peak.

Not a word broke the silence of this extraordinary journey. The carriers traversed with their burden, dark jungles, through which they seemed to find their way with the instinct of wild beasts. Strange animals scampered and fled from under their feet, great night-birds brushed past them on soft, velvety wings,—snow-covered branches and thickets caught at them as they rushed on, without arresting their headlong flight.

Suddenly the freezing wind ceased to fan the temples of the Chinaman; a softer air, as if tempered by enclosing walls, reached him, and, although the darkness was still profound, Si-Sing concluded that they had reached some sheltered spot,—probably a natural grotto such as abound in this part of the Sierras.

CHAPTER III

"LONG LIVE THE INCA PAPA-CAPAC!"

STRETCHING out his hands, Si-Sing was able to touch the roof of the low-arched ways along which he was being carried; sometimes his face scraped the rocks, receiving scratches which seemed to give his bearers no concern whatever. Little by little, as they passed through narrow passages which intersected one another, the grotto grew sensibly larger; now and then gleams of light appeared and were reflected on the polished walls of rock.

At last they reached the end of their journey, and, entering a lofty natural hall, lined with stalactites, the Indians, without a word of warning, threw their burden roughly on the ground.

Si-Sing had no time to admire the splendour of the locality into which he had been so unceremoniously introduced. For in a moment there rose before him from all sides a multitude of In-

dians, who, strange to say, did not seem wholly unfamiliar to him, although he could not have designated by name any one of the faces, which were striped and painted with arabesques, such as are seen on ancient Peruvian vases, of the time of the Incas.

All these Indians were arrayed in costumes such as Si-Sing had never seen them wear, even on the occasion of their most solemn festivals. The "*montero*," or cap, which was their usual head-covering, was replaced by a species of mitre, very tall and white, and surmounted by three feathers of the macaw, in red and green and yellow. Instead of the coarse jacket of worsted, which was their inseparable garment, day and night, they now wore a long tunic of bark, on which was reproduced in profusion the strange arabesques that decorated their faces.

But what most astonished Si-Sing was the alteration in their physiognomy. Degraded by a cruel and scarcely disguised slavery for centuries, the Indians' habitual expression was the cringing, pitiable one of a dog that has been turned

out of doors. But these men carried their heads high, and looked fearlessly and straight before them. Their bearing was proud, their looks full of energy and resolve, and in the dark eyes fixed upon Si-Sing he read a triumph, long deferred, but now assured and close at hand.

How in so short a time could such a change have taken place?

These men were most certainly the same,—the very Indians whom the superintendent had beaten and imprisoned without encountering the least resistance; by what miracle had the timid servile laborers of the railroad been so transformed?

Si-Sing cudgelled his brains in vain for an answer, as he sat on the ground nursing his bruises.

Among these natives of the Sierras who passed again and again before his eyes, he soon distinguished one who appeared far superior to the others. And this one he recognized instantly from his great stature, and his fine eyes,—brilliant, yet soft and gentle as those of a gazelle;

and so amazed was he by the discovery that he could not restrain a cry of astonishment. This personage was none other than the Señor Balthasar Zapata, Head Clerk in the office of the railroad, life-long friend of the Engineer, Colonel Bustamente, and God-father to his daughter, the lovely little Candida!

In this cavern, where he seemed to be in command, Balthasar Zapata had a natural air of authority, which impressed even the Chinaman. A tunic of wool, fine as silk and whiter than snow, covered without confining his graceful yet powerful limbs. He wore sandals of gold, laced over the instep, and on his head was a circlet of gold, fringed with red, which permitted his hair to droop over his forehead. An aigrette of two black and white feathers surmounted this diadem. He carried in his hand as insignia of his rank a mace of gold about a foot in length. As he came forward the Indians made way for him with the most exaggerated marks of respect. He was escorted by two persons, who, from their rich costumes and ornaments of jewels, were evidently high dignitaries of the crown.

One, the Great High Priest, who held the place on the right, was a very old man, withered and wrinkled; but his hair, which fell over his shoulders in Indian fashion, showed not a trace of gray. He wore a robe of black wool, and on his breast glittered a golden Sun; black slippers protected his feet, which were small and delicate, and on each shone a silver Crescent. Last of all, on his eyes, grown dim with age, he had placed a pair of large spectacles rimmed with copper, which to his deep concern Si-Sing recognized as his own!

The second dignitary, whose place was on the left, and whose office was that of Grand-Judge and Executioner, had a face so dark and sombre that one could not behold it without terror. He was dressed from head to foot in red, and the harmony of his blood-coloured costume, which coincided so well with his functions, was further completed by an enormous red umbrella, which he brandished with a ferocious air. Is it needful to say that Si-Sing was once more penetrated with deep emotion in recognizing in this article his own legitimate property?

His distress reached its culminating point when he beheld a third dignitary, apparently of a somewhat inferior order, who marched a few steps behind the chief, carrying with great ceremony a lantern,—his own lantern, which he, in hours of leisure, had decorated with dragons and warriors!

To have lost his parasol, his spectacles, and his lantern, which were all he had preserved to remind him of his distant country, while sojourning in this accursed land of Peru . . . was for Si-Sing the next thing to losing his life.

Plunged in despair, he did not hear his name called. His name, so well known and so hated by the Indians of Tarayaqui, resounded on all sides in tones that echoed throughout the immense cavern.

A blow on the ribs recalled him to a sense of reality; two Indians, who served as his bodyguard, armed with stone hatchets, lifted him brusquely from the ground by his collar.

"You'll tear my clothes!" exclaimed the Chinaman (who was very careful of his belongings).

"By Papa-Capac," replied one of the two, "you'll not need any clothes in a quarter of an hour!"

And he accompanied these sinister words with a look that sent a shiver through the unfortunate Si-Sing.

More dead than alive, he was dragged by his guards before the great Chief, of whom we spoke recently. He, standing upon a natural elevation at one end of the hall, and attended by the two officials described, scarcely deigned to bestow a glance from his flashing eyes upon the victim prostrated on the ground.

Placing his foot, clad in its golden sandal, on the neck of the Chinese, and raising his mace of gold, by a single gesture he commanded silence.

The effect was instantaneous. The agitated and clamouring mass of Indians became mute, as if by magic.

So profound was the stillness that water could be heard trickling, drop by drop, from the fissures of the mountain.

And thus spoke the Indian in the snowy tunic

and gold sandals, his foot on the neck of the prostrate superintendent,—the golden mace in his hand, and his eyes,—those eyes so dark and vague that belong to his race,—uplifted and lost in a sort of ecstatic vision:

"Men of the Sierra! Children of the God Inti-Churi and the Goddess Quilla, hear me!

"*It is I who am the Inca Papa-Capac!*

"I have risen up from among you to reclaim the heritage of my fathers, and your eyes have recognized me.

"*It is I who am the Inca Papa-Capac!*

"Listen to the words of our ancestors, which I repeat to you.

"In the Beginning the Sun shone on a world that was barren and desolate. Men were wicked; the water-springs were bitter; and the wool of the Llamas was too coarse to spin.

"But Inti-Churi took pity on his creatures, and sent his son, Manco-Capac to the earth. He brought peace and plenty to mankind. And Manco-Capac was my ancestor,—who among you dare gainsay it?

"It is I who am the Inca Papa-Capac!

"Men of the Sierra! Children of the God Inti-Churi and the Goddess Quilla, listen! Hear what happened after Manco-Capac, my illustrious ancestor, returned to heaven.

"Twelve Princes reigned after him, and their virtues perfumed the land; but after them there were quarrels in the Household of the Sun; and the Eye of the World was turned away from us because of our sins.

"Then came from the east, mounted on swift horses, Barbarians with pale faces, who spread mourning and desolation in the Household of the Sun.

"You were happy! They made you sorrowful! You were free! They made you slaves!

"Men of the Sierra, three hundred years you have suffered. Your hands have been blistered carrying stones to build the houses of your oppressors. Your backs still bleed from the lash and the chicote.

"But your days of humiliation are ended. Hear me!

"*It is I who am the Inca Papa-Capac!*

"The High Priest has sacrificed before the Sun, and before me, a black lamb of six months, without a blemish; and behold! the Sun has replied. Hear me!

"The time appointed for the end of the Great Expiation has ended. Below, on the plains the white-faced Barbarians, coming from Chili, have over-run the land, and driven our oppressors before them. Every day the great ocean's blue waters are reddened with the blood of our persecutors.

"The sons of Almagro and Pizzaro * are in deadly conflict; the children of the wolf are tearing each other.

"The Eye of the World shines once more on the Sierra; and, mounted on their swift horses, the pale-faced Barbarians will flee to the east and return no more.

"Men of the Sierra! Children of the God Inti-Churi and the Goddess Quilla, to arms! To

---

* Almagro and Pizzaro were two Spanish generals, one of whom conquered Chili, and the other Peru, at the time of the Spanish Conquest.

arms for your Gods! To arms for the celestial race of your own Sovereigns . . . to arms!

"It is I who am the Inca Papa-Capac!"

This address was uttered in the Quicha language, the usual speech of the Indians. It was delivered slowly, in a deep, guttural voice, but with a fiery intensity that was surprising.

CHAPTER IV

"FIND THE EMERALD"

THE effect of the Inca's address was electrical. As if a wind had swept through the cavern, the many-coloured plumes on the tall mitres tossed and swayed, and a tremendous shout resounded: "Long live the Inca Papa-Capac!"

So contagious is the enthusiasm of a crowd that Si-Sing, beneath the foot of the Inca, murmured, as if in confidence to the earth which his lips caressed,—"Long live the Inca Papa-Capac!" . . .

In spite of the unpleasant and mortifying position to which he was condemned, Si-Sing began to understand something of what was passing around him.

Subjugated by the Spaniards from the date of the conquest by Pizzaro, in the first half of the 16th Century, the Indians of Peru had never abandoned the hope of recovering their independence. Notwithstanding the degraded con-

dition to which their conquerors had reduced them, the glorious memories of their ancient civilization lived on in their hearts. Transmitted from mouth to mouth, and from generation to generation, the legends of former greatness kept alive the sacred fire in the souls of the poor outcasts, among whose many thousands but few knew how to read and write.

The existence in their midst of the descendants of their royal family of Incas, though often reduced to the most humble circumstances, nourished their natural hopes, and their desires of revenge; and it was to these fallen Princes that they turned when any one of the crises so frequent in South American politics seemed to offer an opportunity favourable to their aspirations.

The year 1879, in this respect, was peculiarly adapted to awaken their hopes, and the great Papa-Capac had chosen a fitting time to utter his call to arms.

The war, which, on trifling pretexts, had broken out between Chili on the one hand, and Bolivia and Peru on the other, was about to re-

sult in the defeat of the two latter powers.

On the sea, the Peruvian fleet, after a few brilliant engagements, had lost its best cruiser, the *Huascar*, and with it the control of the Pacific. On land the troops of Peru had met with equal disasters, and the news of their defeats had reached the Sierras, where the Indians were preparing to revolt. At several points work on the railroad had been stopped; and at Tarayaqui the engineer in charge, Colonel Gaspard Melchoir Bustamente, had been compelled to join his regiment of Artillery, leaving his wife, and his little daughter of ten years, under the distinguished protection of Mr. Si-Sing. What this protection amounted to, the events we have narrated clearly show. Far from looking after the safety of others, Si-Sing had quite enough to occupy his thoughts with his own.

He was at this moment, as we have said, suffocating under the golden sandal of Papa-Capac, and, with what little reason he had left at his command, he was debating the question, to what extent, and in what ways the numberless cruel-

ties, which he had inflicted upon the Indians, were now to be repaid to him!

On this point he could form no conclusion. The Inca had, it is true, removed his foot, and allowed him to remain on his knees, before his sacred majesty; but the meeting was not over; and the High Priest, Iri-Yaqui, prepared, in his turn, to harangue the assembly. His voice was feeble and broken, and heard with difficulty, in spite of the deferential silence which reigned in the cavern.

"Oh, my children," said he, "let us not rejoice too soon. Let us not be like the labourer who stops to rest before the sun has reached the zenith, and has lighted up the depths of the valley! For eighty years my eyes have wearied themselves gazing upon the face of our great Father, the Sun; and, behold! this is what has been revealed to me. The despoilers will not leave the country, where they have ruled for three centuries, till Papa-Capac shall find, and place on his breast, the Sacred Emerald which his ancestor Manco-Capac brought from heaven to con-

vince unbelieving mortals of his divine mission. Only by this means will he enter Cuzco, and plant the Rainbow Banner over the Palace of his Fathers. I have spoken."

The face of the Inca darkened with a shadow of disappointment and impatience, as he listened to these words of the venerable High Priest. Perhaps he had thought that the present emergency would justify a neglect of this traditional rite, the importance of which he was familiar with, but which seemed difficult of accomplishment just now. Perhaps, also, there was between himself and the Pontiff a secret lack of sympathy. . . . But he dared not oppose himself to the prejudices of the Indians.

"Man of God," said he, with feigned humility, "thy least words, since they emanate from the sacred Source of all Life, are as commands to the son of my father. Speak then! Speak quickly, and tell us where this wonderful Emerald can be found, and how we may obtain it."

The High Priest seemed plunged in thought for an instant; then he replied, letting his words

fall slowly,—like a miser forced to part with his gold pieces.

"The Gods have concealed the sacred Emerald from the cupidity of white men, and have hidden it in the inaccessible depths of the *Quebrada* of Cuzco.* They will reveal its whereabouts to the faithful at the appointed time. But it is not given to ordinary mortals to touch the divine Stone with their impure hands."

"And for whom, then?" exclaimed with a savage look the Grand-Judge, Tapou-Tambou, who had not spoken before: "for whom do the Gods reserve this favour?"

The Pontiff waited a few moments before replying; meantime, the assembly, trembling with superstitious awe, awaited his answer in silence. Their terror communicated itself even to Si-Sing! . . .

The pale lips of the holy man seemed to move, as they muttered a long invocation. At last the oracle deigned to speak, and his words sent a

---

* "Quebrada" is the name given in Peru to a wild, rocky glen or ravine. The quebrada of Cuzco leads to the city of that name, formerly the capital of the country.

shudder through the audience, so unexpected and terrible were they.

"Thus speaks your Father the Sun; Life is only engendered by death, and it is from the race of our tyrants, forever accursed that the salvation of our people will come! To un-seal the lips of the first of the Incas, who has slept for three centuries in the Royal Grotto, the God demands a young white girl, who is not over twelve years of age, who has hair as golden as the rays of the Sun, and whose eyes reflect the colour of the Emerald."

The High Priest had not designated any one, and seemed to have spoken only in a general sense; but a name ran from mouth to mouth till it reached the most distant limits of the hall.

"*Candida! Candida! Candida!*"

It was true that the daughter of Señor Bustamente united all the characteristics exacted by the oracle; she was of the white race, was just about to enter her eleventh year, and was,—a rare thing in the Sierra,—a lovely golden blonde, with emerald eyes, traits to which the Indians

attach the idea of demoniacal fascination and sorcery.

Si-Sing, who had remained near the Inca, remarked that he turned deathly pale at these last words of the High Priest. As yet barely crowned, must he already feel the bitterness of greatness? Must he at the very outset be compelled to sacrifice the little God-child, whom he so tenderly loved, to the ignorant and brutal superstitions of his subjects?

"Man of God," said he, after the first moment of anguish had passed: "explain yourself more fully. In speaking of a young girl designated by fate, was it of Candida you spoke?"

"Thou hast said," replied the High Priest, with a voice that was calm, though feeble.

"But she is my God-daughter!" exclaimed Papa-Capac.

The High Priest smiled bitterly.

"Oh, man of little faith!" said he, "she *was* the God-daughter of Balthasar Zapata; but the Inca Papa-Capac, the Child of the Sun, can have no ties with the white servants of Christ!"

The Inca bent his head, without answering.

"If your soul is too weak," continued the old man, "to renounce the affections of the world in which you have lived until now,—you can turn back. Hated and despised more than the lowest of the whites, you can turn back. The road is open before you. Not a hand will be lifted against the descendant of the divine Manco-Capac, degenerate though he be! Depart, return if you choose, and once more place the chain upon your neck. The groans and curses of your people abandoned forever to slavery are all that will ever remind you of their existence! . . ."

The generous nature of the Inca, which would have resisted an appeal to personal ambition, yielded to this appeal made to his honour.

"My people," cried he proudly, "will never suffer through fault of mine! I will go on to the end of my task. My heart breaks at the thought of the wrong I am called upon to do to my beloved God-child; but whoso is not willing to sacrifice his affections to his country, is unworthy to serve it. It shall be, therefore, as you say. But

promise me that Candida's life shall be safe, and that she shall suffer no harm!"

"The Gods will dispose of her," replied evasively the old man.

The Inca was so desirous of being reassured that he contented himself with this ambiguous response. He failed to see the gleam of strange light that shone suddenly in the dim eyes of the High Priest, or the dark smile with which Tapou-Tambou, the Grand-Judge, greeted his words.

"The die is cast," announced the latter, "and we have not a minute to spare. Already much time has been lost; and this winter night, long as it is, draws near its close."

"Rise, slave," said he, addressing Si-Sing, who, during the foregoing debate, had begun to cherish the delightful hope that he had been forgotten.

"Do you hear? You are told to get up!" thundered Tapou-Tambou.

Si-Sing rose, trembling, to his feet.

"I had you brought here," said Papa-Capac,

"intending to execute justice upon you, and avenge the wrongs to my people, of which you have been guilty."

"Don't be angry, Your Majesty. . . . I beg of you do not get excited. . . . If I had known who you were . . ."

"Silence!" said the Inca.

"Another word, and you shall die," added the fierce Grand-Judge.

The two Indians, who had been guarding the Chinese, raised their weapons to strike, but at a sign from the Sovereign they lowered their arms.

"Listen to me," said he, "and speak less. I spare your life on one condition only.'

"If you are going to ask me to find the Emerald for you, I can only say that I will not undertake anything of the sort," whimpered he. "I know nothing of where it is; besides, I am more than twelve years old,—and I have not emerald eyes! . . ."

"Once for all,—will you hold your peace, intolerable gabbler? You are to go at once to Tarayaqui. . . ."

"With the greatest pleasure, illustrious Señor!"

"Do not rejoice too soon. When we arrive where we are going, you will be told what you must do to obtain your liberty."

"I would prefer to know it right away," murmured the Chinese, who suspected a trap of some kind into which he was being led.

"You will know when the time comes, and no sooner. Meanwhile, not a word,—not a signal of any kind to our foes,—or . . ."

The Inca pointed to the guards with their stone hatchets. Si-Sing understood, and hung his head. But his tongue, his incorrigible tongue, was beyond control, and as they began their march to the entrance of the cavern, he turned to the Grand-Judge in front of whom he was placed, saying:

"I *may* be mistaken,—but it seems to me it was *you* whom I ordered *whipped* last Sunday. If I had known . . ."

He did not finish; the Grand-Judge, who was not flattered by the reminiscence, raised the um-

brella, and brought it down with a whack between his shoulders.

"You need not break it, anyway!" said the unhappy Celestial; "it's the only one in all Peru!"

With these words he departed with his persecutors from the grotto where he had experienced such trying emotions, and started to accompany them on their return to Tarayaqui.

CHAPTER V

THE ABDUCTION OF CANDIDA

THE march from the mysterious cavern to the village of Tarayaqui was not without injury to the fat, tender feet of the Chinaman. At each stone that he encounterd on the steep paths down which he hurried, he gave a groan which was instantly cut sort by a blow from the umbrella. The stern Grand-Judge handled his new and improvised weapon with a skill that did him credit.

"Next time I'll choose one with a lighter handle!" murmured the poor man at each fresh mark of attention bestowed by his fierce companion.

But he soon had more serious matters to think of. At last, when he least expected it, the troop of Indians, who glided so silently and swiftly through the darkness, reached their destination.

The snow had ceased; in the clear heavens a

few pale stars twinkled, and on the frozen earth, wrapped in shadows, Tarayaqui still slumbered.

On the summit of the slope on which the houses of the village were scattered, a single light burned brightly in the second story of a stone dwelling of more imposing appearance than the surrounding cottages.

It was there that the Señora Bustamente lived with her only daughter, Candida.

The Señora's maiden name had been Maria Patrizzi, for she was not a Peruvian, Corsica being her native place.

The daughter of an old shepherd, she herself tended her father's sheep on the mountains near Sartena; and it chanced that one day she saved the life of Colonel Bustamente, then a young man, who had come from Paris, where he was a student at the Central School, in order to make a geological exploration, and had fallen into a crevasse, where the dogs belonging to her flock discovered him.

Small and slight, but beautifully formed, with delicate lips and magnificent black eyes that

lighted up her face, Maria Patrizzi was a true Corsican.

Child of a land where the women are as courageous as the men, born in the wild and wooded region of the Maquis, raised in the free, pure air of the mountains,—she had grown up gifted with the power of swift decision and energetic action. She was familiar and accomplished in the use of all sorts of firearms, and her husband had often been astonished at the quickness and accuracy of her aim.

On this occasion, in spite of the absence of her husband, the Colonel, who had left to rejoin his command in the Peruvian army, the Indians, who knew her to be a determined woman and always armed, felt it needful to proceed with caution.

Upon a soft, almost inaudible whistle from Papa-Capac, some of them stole noiselessly to the rear of the house, which they ascended by climbing stealthily. The remainder took positions in the shadows, and remained crouched as motionless as the rocks that concealed them.

Si-Sing, whom fear had drenched with perspir-

ation in spite of the cold, was thinking of flight, when he felt a heavy hand,—that of the Grand-Judge,—on his collar. At the same time his persecutor, whose grasp he felt only too keenly on his soft flesh, whispered in his ear:

"Call the Señora Bustamente!"

Si-Sing hesitated; and the same voice, smothered, but menacing, added:

"Obey,—or you die!"

The point of a dagger, which tickled his skin in a disagreeable manner, gave him to understand that this was no vain threat.

Now, Si-Sing felt himself possessed of some learning (having seven times failed to pass his examinations for the position of schoolmaster in China), and he at once called to mind a maxim of Confucius to this effect: "*Courage and common sense are two very different things.*" Upon reflection, he concluded that the despicable treachery demanded of him was less distasteful than death.

"Señora! Señora!" cried he at the top of his voice.

Perplexed and anxious at not seeing her superintendent return with his night's report, the Señora had remained up all night.

She appeared instantly on the wooden balcony that surrounded the house.

"Is that you, Si-Sing?" enquired she, raising the candle, which she held in her hand, in an endeavour to see more clearly into the dark street. But the obscurity made it impossible to distinguish any object.

"Yes, Mistress, it is I," replied Si-Sing.

"Why are you so late? And what have you done with your lantern? You have been spending the night drinking Chica with those accursed Indians. . . . Look out for the whipping-post tomorrow morning!"

The threat was most unfortunate just at this time. It instantly did away with the very slight inclination felt by Si-Sing to play an heroic part.

"No, Mistress," said he, in the whining tone which was habitual with him, "I have not been drinking; you accuse me most unjustly. You little know what I have seen!"

"What do you mean? . . . Has bad news come from the army? Oh! heavens . . . my husband. . . . But we must make no noise. Candida is asleep at last; she has been sick all the evening. She has had the most fearful dreams!"

The Chinaman was on the point of calling, "Don't come down!" when he once more felt the tip of the dagger pressed against his neck, and being too fond of his life to sacrifice it for the sake of another,—he held his peace.

The night now left the second story, which instantly grew dark; the Señora descended the wooden stairs, and, coming to the door, she drew the bolts.

This was the moment! One Indian dashed out the light, another held open the door, and five or six rushed into the house. On all sides terrific yells burst forth.

The daughter of the Corsican shepherd was not one to be easily taken by surprise; drawing her revolver, she fired pointblank into the darkness. A cry of pain was the reply; it came from

Si-Sing, who had received the bullet intended for the invaders.

But the Señora, alone as she was, could not hope to defend herself against the swarms which surrounded her home. She was seized, bound, and thrown on the ground, beside Si-Sing, who lay howling in a way to melt a heart of stone.

Meantime, the bedroom of the little girl on the second floor had been entered at the same moment from the stairs and the balcony outside.

Awakened with a start, she imagined that what she saw was a continuation of the hideous dreams which had pursued her all night. She beheld with terror, leaning over her bed, the faces of the Indians, striped with red and black; and, by the glare of the torches which they had lighted, she gazed tremblingly on these monsters, who, to her childish fancy, seemed like demons escaped from the infernal regions.

While some of them bounded about the room, brandishing their hatchets, others seized and overturned the articles on the toilet table, and broke to pieces her simple furniture.

They offered no harm to her; but one of them, who had ventured to extend his hand to clutch the little gold cross which she wore suspended around her neck, was not permitted to complete the attempt. A person of imposing stature, who seemed to be their chief, struck him down by a blow from a gold mace, which he held in his hand.

In raising his arm for this purpose, he had unintentionally disarranged the "*poncho*," or cloak, which concealed his face Candida recognized him and cried:

"Help! . . . Help! . . . Save me, dear Godfather, I implore you . . ."

The child, whom he had so often cradled in his arms, called on him in so touching a voice that he could not resist the impulse of tenderness that drew him towards her; but as he leaned gently over the bed to reassure her, a hand fell heavily on his shoulder, and, turning, he met the grim, threatening glance of the High Priest.

It was enough . . . and once more he was the Inca Papa-Capac.

"Do not cry, my child," said he quietly: "They

will not harm you." Then, to the Indians, "Wrap her up in the covers and carry her away!" commanded he. "But, by the soul of my ancestors, if you injure so much as a hair of the child's head, your lives shall answer for it!"

Warmly enveloped in her blankets, her head covered by a scarf, found by chance, the poor little girl was taken away with no trouble. She cried, and called:

"Mama! Oh, Mama!" . . . But her nature was so timid and gentle that she never thought of resistance.

At the foot of the stairs she beheld a lamentable sight. Si-Sing, seated in a corner, was occupied in stanching his wound, which was but slight, while the Señora, alive and unwounded, but tightly bound, dragged herself to the door, and strove frantically to defend her daughter. The Grand-Judge, with his usual brutality, threw her to one side, and she saw with despair her daughter carried away into the darkness.

"Farewell, Mama,—farewell forever!" cried the little girl; her cries grew fainter and more

indistinct as she was borne off, and soon ceased to be heard.

The whole of the occurrences narrated had lasted barely a quarter of an hour. At the sound of the shots, the village had awakened. The townspeople and the Chinese ran to the scene, bringing lanterns. It was too late to succour Candida; the Indians had escaped, without leaving any traces behind them, and in going had set fire to the house.

There was barely time to rescue the Señora, and to drag out Si-Sing, who was in danger of being roasted. At the moment of their arrival, the fire had touched his magnificent black hair,—and his famous braid,—his superb queue, more than a yard long, remained in the ashes!

It was long before Si-Sing forgot this fatal night, on which he was destined to lose all that formed his pride and happiness; his spectacles, his lantern, his parasol,—and his queue,—to say nothing of the dear little mistress, who, next to those four articles, was dearer to him than all else in the world.

CHAPTER VI

THE SENORA'S ARMY

So many misfortunes, falling all at once, would have overwhelmed a less energetic and determined woman. But when the morning dawned, dark and misty, Maria Patrizzi was able to look, undaunted, at the smoking ruins of her home.

Her first care was to send a message to her husband, briefly informing him, in as few words as possible, of what had occurred. She was well aware that she could count on no assistance from him. Colonel Bustamente was then at Tarapaca, in the southern portion of Peru, more than one hundred leagues from the spot where the odious outrage had been committed. He was awaiting, from day to day, the onslaught of the Chilean army, which was advancing by forced marches on the city.

What would be his agony on hearing the dreadful news? To yield to his impulse, and fly to the succour of his wife and child, would be to abandon his post as a soldier. Fearful alternative! Maria Patrizzi knew that her husband would not hesitate an instant. Divided as he would be between his affection for his family and his duty as a soldier, it would seem to him only one more sacrifice made for his country,—a sacrifice far more cruel than that of his life. But the country, to whom we owe all,—has she not the right to demand of us all we have?

It was plain that Donna Bustamente must think and act for herself,—and she had already decided to do so.

It is needless to say she had not for a moment thought of invoking the laws of the country. Even in ordinary times this would have been a lengthy proceeding, and likely to prove uncertain in its results. At present it was out of the question. From the commencement of hostilities Peru had been given over to complete anarchy. At the opening of the war every able-

bodied man had been called to the plains to face the invaders. No police, no magistrates,—no forces of any kind were available to protect citizens. The Sierra, deserted and left to itself, had at once declared for independence, and the conditions now existing were the primitive ones of nature, wherein each one must protect himself,—or perish.

Nothing could in the main have been more pleasing to the Señora Bustamente. She had been raised in the mountain forests of Corsica, among shepherds and bandits; totally ignorant of the law, and heartily despising it, she was accustomed, like all her countrymen, to rely solely on her own hand for the punishment of her foes!

After swallowing a few mouthfuls of food to sustain her strength, after the excitement and shock of the preceding night, she went at once to the cabin of Si-Sing, where she established her headquarters. Next she proceeded to make inquiries, and interrogate the Superintendent.

With his arm in a sling, very humble and subdued, as became him after his contemptible

treachery, he was about to begin his recital, when a great hubbub was heard outside, accompanied by the shouts and yells of an advancing multitude.

"Take care, Mistress! Take care!" cried Si-Sing, as usual easily frightened; "It is much easier to get into trouble than to get out of it!"

"Coward!" said the Señora, glancing at him with disdain. As he was endeavouring to place himself before the door, she contemptuously brushed him aside, and opening the door, went out. Her lips were pressed firmly together, her eyes blazing, and in her delicate little hand she carried a whip with a silver handle.

At a glance she saw what was happening. Following the example of the Indians, the Chinese had risen against their masters.

There were about one hundred of them; with their little slant eyes, and their rat-tails fluttering down their backs, they were shouting and pushing each other in a confused mass. Some shouted in Chinese, some in poor Spanish, and some in Quicha, . . . it was a babel!

At the sight of the Señora Bustamente, who came boldly forward, their shouts redoubled.

"What do you want?" said she.

"Liberty! Liberty! . . . We want our liberty!"

She shrugged her shoulders.

"Fools that you are! Do you suppose I have got your liberty in my pocket? . . . Ask the Government for it,—you are its servants, not mine."

Yellow mobs are no more intelligent than white ones. They continued to threaten and gesticulate, shouting:

"Liberty! . . . Liberty! . . ."

She placed both hands over her ears; this had the effect of producing quiet.

"I cannot," said she, profiting by the momentary lull; "I cannot discuss matters with a mob. . . . Let one of your number come forward and inform me what are your complaints; I will hear what he has to say."

At this reasonable proposal the Chinese seemed to hesitate; they talked together in low voices,

each one seeming anxious to place the responsibility on his neighbour. Cool and indifferent,—at least outwardly,—Donna Bustamente waited.

At last a Chinese left the crowd and came forward; he was a huge fellow of the most brutal appearance, with a deep, powerful chest. His type more nearly resembled the European, and he evidently belonged to one of the races which inhabit the mountains of the island of Formosa.

"What is your name?" asked the Señora.

"Chao-tung."

"Ah! I remember you; you are one of our best workmen,—that is, when you are willing to work; but you are not always willing. . . . Have you ever been in the lock-up?"

"Yes," said he sullenly. "I was there fifteen days for striking Si-Sing."

"Ah, yes! I remember you now. And it is you whom your friends have chosen to be their representative! An excellent choice, truly! Well, go on. Speak. But be careful of your words. What is it that your people want?"

"We want to go back to our own country."

She laughed.

"Your country is rather far off! Do you so much as know in what direction it lies?"

He pointed with his finger towards the west.

"Good! I did not suppose you were so well informed! But you crossed the ocean to come here, and you must cross it again to get home to China. And how do you expect to even reach the coast? You would all dic of hunger and thirst before arriving there."

"You will give us provisions,—the store-houses are full."

"But if I refuse?"

"We will take them."

"You will take them?"

"Yes. And we will take those sparkling things you have in your ears! The Indians have taken the daughter,—why should we not take the rest? A Chinaman is every bit as good as an Indian, I guess!"

While speaking he had drawn near, and raised a hand enormously enlarged by the use of the

pick and the shovel. His looks were so repulsive that in spite of her courage Donna Bustamente recoiled a few steps.

"Come back! Come back, Mistress!" called Si-Sing, as he stood in the doorway of his cabin, waving frantically his one serviceable arm.

The moment was critical. The Señora felt that she was lost if she turned to enter. Divining her hesitation, the circle of Chinese approached nearer. Her resolve was taken. Drawing up her slender form, and standing firmly where she was, she quietly passed her loaded and silver-mounted whip from the left to the right hand.

"Chao-Tung," said she; "you are a cowardly rascal, and my only regret is that I did not long before this have you punished as you deserve. But you will lose nothing by my delay. For having spoken with insolence to the wife of your master, you shall receive presently twenty-five blows of the lash."

"Twenty-five blows of the lash?" yelled the savage. . . . Wild with rage, he raised his arm

to strike down his frail adversary, with a fist that resembled a blacksmith's hammer.

With a single bound the Señora sprang to one side, and as her huge assailant, carried forward by the impetus of his blow, reeled for an instant like a drunken man, she brought the loaded end of her whip down on his head.

The skull was heard to crack like a breaking plank. The gigantic brute fell heavily onto the frozen ground,—and his companions, instead of coming to his rescue,—looked on, silent and confounded.

Then, stepping carelessly over the insensible mass at her feet, the courageous Corsican walked boldly up to the Coolies. Si-Sing (seeing her victorious) came out and followed at her heels like a big spaniel!

"You have asked for liberty," said she to the mutineers in a thrilling voice; "*I will give it to you.* Alone, by yourselves you are powerless against the perils that surround you; everything here,—both the country and the people are hostile to you. Long before you would obtain even

a far-off glimpse of the blue ocean, which separates you from your country, you would all of you, without my assistance, die of fatigue and hunger in the mountains. Madmen! . . . You need a head to counsel you,—an arm to direct you. I will be that head; I will be that arm. I here pledge you my word, and that of my husband, Gaspard Melchior Bustamente, that inside of a year at the latest you shall see the native land you long for."

A deep murmur ran through the ranks of the Chinamen, who were greatly moved at the prospect held out to them by Donna Bustamente.

Si-Sing, more demonstrative than the others, and feeling perhaps the greater need of forgiveness, threw himself on his knees on the ground, and kissed the edge of his mistress' dress.

But Donna Bustamente had not finished her speech:

"Friends," said she, in a softer and more persuasive tone of voice, "what I have told you is only a part of my plans. You are too sensible not to realize that all service merits a reward."

"Confucius has said the same thing," murmured Si-Sing, who had not yet risen.

"Listen, then," continued the Señora, "to what I have to propose."

"You all know,"—and here they could observe that, in spite of her firmness,—her voice trembled and broke. . . . "You all know the dreadful sorrow that befell me last night. Infamous villains, profiting by the absence of my husband, have stolen my daughter. I have now but one object in life; to find my child and punish her abductors. Will you aid me in this sacred work? Will you be helpers, my friends, my soldiers? Remember my dear little Candida, how she went about smilingly and lovingly among you! How she used to try and help you, and would take up your heavy tools in her soft, little hands. . . . Poor little darling! Young as she was, she loved you; she felt for your misfortunes, and pitied you with all her heart; and when any of you were sick, her greatest joy was to go and sit by you, and try to comfort you. Friends, she was my child,—but she was yours,

too! Will you not help me to get her back?"

The fiery heart of the Corsican shepherdess melted as she spoke of Candida, and her emotion communicated itself to those who listened.

The Chinese have the highest veneration for family affection. Their mood changed; and softened even to tears by the thought of the tender child so miserably lost, they cried out with sobs:

"*You have spoken well, Mistress!* We will follow you! Lead us, and we will fight for you, and will stand by you and your little girl to the death!"

CHAPTER VII

LOST IN THE SNOWS OF THE CRUCERO

WHILE Donna Bustamente, with her usual energy, was bending all her efforts to raise a Chinese army in the wilds of Peru, to rescue her daughter,—the Indians who had taken Candida were fleeing with her through the Sierras.

Instead of venturing into the warm valleys, where the descendants of the Spanish settlers might have resisted his progress, Papa-Capac, like a prudent commander, had not neglected to push constantly on towards the higher levels of the mountains.

Wherever he passed, the men of his own race rose and joined him; but as they approached the frozen summits of the Andes, villages grew scarce; life gradually disappeared, and the desolate region offered only here and there the shelter of bare rocks almost entirely buried in snow.

In this portion of the country, to the north of

Lake Titicaca, the peaks which dominate with their eternal whiteness the countless sources of the Amazon, attain nearly the altitude of eighteen thousand feet.

The European Alps, which appear like dwarfs compared with these giants, can hardly, even in their wildest sections, give an idea of the wonderful and sublime spectacle, which these limitless regions of snow and ice offer at all seasons of the year.

Accustomed to the climate of their native land, rescued so recently from a life of slavery, and all its miseries,—the Indians marched on, as if unconscious of the cruel severity of the cold.

Not so Candida; she had been a fragile child, reared by her mother with infinite care and tenderness; and it was not without reason that she had received the name of the "Lily of the Sierras." Poor lily! . . . pale little blossom, springing up as flowers that bloom beneath the snow! Candida had never grown accustomed to the wild land of her birth. Here, where her life could only have been nourished and invigorated by an

active existence, such as causes the heart to beat strongly and send the rosy colour to the cheeks, she had lived languidly, like a flower bending upon its stem, in a sort of hot-house environment.

So gentle and serious was she that her mother was often vexed. Donna Bustamente, who recalled her own boisterous youth, could not be reconciled to so sensitive and timid a child. When she would find her lost in admiration of some of the rare minerals belonging to her father's collection, or engaged in embroidering with minute care one of the dainty little "reliquaries" so much valued in the Sierras, she would say impatiently:

"Wake up, little Sleepy-head! Surely you can never be my child! You have not a drop of Corsican blood in your veins! Ah! if you had seen me at your age, in our mountains,—how I used to leap from crag to crag after our goats! . . . I could not have been more than twelve,—but no one dared to contradict me! I was not any bigger,—no, not any bigger than

you, when I declared a 'Vendetta' against cousin Bastalica, who had called me a 'Blackey.' I, a '*Blackey!*' " continued Donna Bustamente: "Dark I am,—I admit, but Bastalica knew better than to call me that again!"

The little girl would listen to this tirade without interrupting, smiling with her usual calm and somewhat sad expression, and then draw up close to her mother's side, with a movement so soft and caressing that her impetuous mother felt her severity melt away, like snow under the touch of the warm south winds.

One can imagine what must have been the sufferings of so delicate a child, taken roughly from its mother's arms, in the dead of night, and brought away into a temperature that even robust men were barely able to endure.

Still wrapped up in the blankets of the bed where they had found her, Candida had made the journey thus far in the arms of the Indians.

The orders of the Inca on this point had been strict; but compelled as he was to be almost constantly at the head of the company to encourage

his followers, he had been unable to watch over his God-daughter.

The paths on the mountain were not broken, and, marching deep in snow, the Indians moved on slowly in single file, painfully setting foot in the tracks of those who had preceded them.

Little by little, so impossible was it to wait for such as fell behind, the long column wound along in fragments, like a mutilated serpent, whose parts were unable to unite.

The Indian who carried Candida, a prey to the superstitions of his race, scarcely daring to touch her golden hair, which seemed to him like the flames of the infernal regions, now profited by a moment when he saw himself unobserved, and set her upon her feet in the snow. He replaced her blankets by a "poncho" much too large for her, and thus overburdened, and with sandals that left her little feet exposed, she was made to follow the troop.

The fierce north wind, which poured down from the heights, struck with terrible chill upon her unprotected chest; her beautiful hair so fine

and long and silky, her hair so tenderly kissed by her mother every morning when she combed it, escaped in wild disorder from beneath her scarf; and her little feet bled as their skin, soft as tissue, came in contact with the icy stones.

But her tormentors had not the satisfaction of hearing a complaint. The frail child showed a patience and fortitude that was surprising, and which seemed to resemble the strength of the Señora, but in another form.

But that which was wholly her own, and which she certainly did not derive from either of her parents, was the angelic sweetness which she showed in her misfortunes. Her lovely emerald eyes, which the cold had filled with tears, were lifted full of pity to her persecutors. "What harm have I ever done you?" they seemed to say; and "How you yourselves must have suffered to be willing to treat a child so cruelly!"

The road mounted constantly higher and higher. The fanatical Indians followed their leader without asking where he was conducting them.

There were long hours of the march when it seemed as if they had not even begun as yet to scale the enormous heights which they had undertaken to cross. At each new ascent poor Candida asked herself, "Will this be the last?" But always beyond the snowy summit they had gained, others extended, white and limitless.

By degrees, the little girl, whom nobody thought of now, fell back among the last ranks. The distance between her and the laggards increased; one of her sandals fell off, and was lost in the snow; she stopped behind for a moment to look for it, and when she attempted to run after the others, her limbs failed her. Then, wholly unable to walk, exhausted with fatigue and cold, she sank at the foot of a great rock of black basalt, to rest,—or to die. . . .

Young as she was, she had always been a thoughtful, religious child. The snow, which covered the mountains as far as the eye could reach, reminded her of the white shroud they place over little dead children, when they carry them away from their mothers. . . .

These pale and icy solitudes of the Crucero, which she had so often heard spoken of in hushed tones of awe and mystery, were to be her tomb!

What fearful legends had she not heard of these regions?—dreaded even by the Spaniards, where ghosts of the Incas, unmolested by their conquerors, perpetually return to mourn and lament!

She saw but too well that the descriptions fell far below the reality, and she expected to see each moment standing between the black sky and the white plain the spirit of one of those emperors whose misfortunes and adventures she had listened to as her God-father rocked her to sleep! And to think that this God-father,—so cruel,—whom she had so loved,—was one of those emperors! Try as she would she could not picture him with a diadem, and a great mantle of ermine, such as emperors wear!

In the midst of these thoughts sleep came upon her suddenly. An inexpressible comfort took possession of her; a smile of peace and contentment rested upon her lips, violet with the cold,

and after a last goodnight to her parents, she slept.

She dreamed that she was once more in Tarayaqui, in her own home before a splendid fire that lighted up all the room. How warm she was! and how good it seemed, after the cold she had endured! She seemed to be lying on a soft carpet of llama's wool, and as she held out her hands towards the fire to warm them, she could scarcely recognize them, they were so cracked and swollen. Near her stood her father, leaning on the gun she knew so well, and he was crying as he looked at her. . . . Never before had she seen her father cry! . . . She saw her mother also in her dream; she was walking up and down the room, rapidly and determinedly. Her face was stern, her lips tightly closed, and her brilliant eyes were dry. Oh! what a look! What a dark look! She had no need to speak; it was so easy to see what was in her heart; despair,—hatred,—and fierce desires for vengeance convulsed her features.

It seemed to Candida that she tried to rise and go to her mother, but that she fell back on the carpet, unable to reach her. Although suffering no pain, all her members seemed benumbed. Holding beseeching hands to her mother, in response to what she saw were the secret thoughts of her heart, she cried:

"Mother! Mother! They have done evil to me,—but do not you return evil to them!"

And as Donna Bustamente made a violent gesture of refusal, it seemed in her sleep that a mortal anguish pierced her heart, and she sobbed and cried:

"Oh! Mother. . . . Pardon them! . . . Do you want to kill your child a second time?"

CHAPTER VIII

INCA OR GOD-FATHER

SUDDENLY a violent blow awakened the little girl.

"Up! child of the Devil, and march on! Did you think to escape us?"

The speaker was none other than Tapou-Tambou, the Grand-Judge. Although the Inca held this brutal and blood-thirsty man in abhorrence, he had, for reasons of policy, been compelled to appoint him to one of the most important positions in the new kingdom. An own cousin to the Inca, Tapou-Tambou was supposed to have some pretensions to the throne; and his ferocious hatred of the whites had rendered him especially popular with the Indians.

Never was his hatred more bitterly manifested than towards the helpless Candida. Tapou-Tambou, whose thick-set, awkward figure and repulsive features would have befitted a butcher

of the slaughter house, hated the "Lily of the Sierras." He, more than any one else, had been the prime-mover in the plot to carry her off, and, having been the first to perceive her absence, he had retraced his steps to find her and punish her to his satisfaction.

Stiff with cold, and but half-recovered from her dreams, Candida slowly opened her eyes. Incapable of moving, she lay motionless, and gazed at the fierce Indian who had spoken so brutally to her.

Tapou-Tambou was not a patient man. His heavy hand again descended on her shoulder.

"Up! I say,—march on! Otherwise the vultures will make their supper off your bones, and that is not the fate the Gods intend for you! . . ."

In an agony of terror, Candida endeavoured to rise, and take a few tottering steps forward on the snow. She possessed a fine courage,—more than would be expected of one so young,—but strength was lacking. In a few moments she was obliged again to stop; a violent nausea seized

her; her heart beat in irregular spasms,—her ice-cold limbs refused to support her, and she sank on the ground, without a word of reproach to her tyrant.

Tapou-Tambou knew not the meaning of pity! A man of merely primitive and savage instincts, he knew the whites only from the blows he had received at their hands, and his nature was too low to recoil from taking vengeance upon an innocent child.

With an oath he struck the almost insensible form that lay before him.

"Come!" said he, "enough of fine airs, Princess! March on,—or I will make you. Do you suppose that whips are made only to use on Indians?"

"Wretch!" cried a voice at his elbow: "Touch her so much as by a finger, and you, yourself, shall *die* under the lash!"

At the same instant the Inca, for it was he who had spoken, knelt beside Candida.

Paler than the lily whose name she bore, the child lay totally unconscious.

"Woe to you if she is dead!" furiously exclaimed the Inca to Tapou-Tambou, who, with arms crossed, stood looking darkly at him, without a word.

But Candida was not dead. Assisted by the High Priest Iri-Yaqui, who arrived with some of his servants, Papa-Capac succeeded in forcing open her locked teeth, and introducing a few drops of Agua-ardiente between her lips. Restored to life by the burning liquid, the child rose painfully to a sitting posture, and putting her arms around the neck of the Inca as he bent over her, she said in a tone so sweet and touching that it stirred even Tapou-Tambou:

"Is it you, God-father? Oh! how long you have been coming to your poor god-child . . . she has been very sick! Shall I see Mama soon? . . ."

At each word, remorse, like a sharp knife, pierced the heart of the Inca, and the High Priest, who was watching him closely, saw that he turned away to hide his tears.

"Is this what you promised me?" said Iri-Ya-

qui: "The Elect of the Sun has more important matters to think of than the misfortunes of a little girl."

"How can I fight against the feelings of my own heart?" exclaimed Papa-Capac.

"You can, and you must," replied Iri-Yaqui, who was not without a certain dignity in his intolerant bigotry. "You are gravely mistaken if you suppose that merely to be the descendant of Manco-Capac entitles you to reign over his people. To occupy a throne one must be worthy of it."

"Have I not proved myself worthy?" cried Papa-Capac, stung in spite of himself by the old man's reproaches.

The Pontiff replied slowly, and with firmness:

"You are young; and you have been raised among the whites. They have given you in place of the diamond heart that beats in every Indian's breast, a heart without hardness or resolution. But courage, my son! Courage! Remember the race from which you have sprung; remember the

exalted position which the will of the Gods has ordained you to fill. A ruler of the people, so highly placed that his feet rest on the heads and the necks of men, must also be above them in all common affections and feelings. The Inca belongs to his Nation,—not to himself!"

The High Priest had spoken with a bitter and fanatical sort of eloquence, his arm extended towards the Inca, and his air was one of imposing majesty.

The young Sovereign, overcome, could only bend his head, much to the joy of Tapou-Tambou who smiled grimly at his discomfiture.

Meanwhile, Candida was gradually regaining her senses. They had placed her on blankets, and the "mozos," or servants, were busily engaged in rubbing her half-frozen feet and hands with snow, while, without a word, she gazed from one to another of the speakers.

The High Priest had, with shrewdness, placed his finger on the weak spot in the character of the Inca.

Although the actual lineal descendant of the

ancient royal line of sovereigns, Papa-Capac was, in reality, only half-Indian in disposition. Educated with Colonel Bustamente in France, imbued with the ideas and customs of Europe, he had inevitably yielded to the softening influences of civilization. On returning to his own country, the traditions and sentiments of his race had again asserted their power; but he could not divest himself wholly of the training he had received across the water; and there were now existing in him *two* men; the Inca, proud of his ancestors and the antiquity of his people, and the intelligent, civilized, modern man, educated in the sciences of the whites, capable of understanding and respecting them,—and above all,—an unpardonable sin in the Indians' eyes,—capable of loving them!

The appalling difficulty of the task he had undertaken appeared to him now, for the first time, in all its immensity; and he saw that between himself and his people there existed an unsurmountable wall,—and an unfathomable abyss.

But, tender of heart, and feeble of will, he could only defer till later what must be a dangerous decision; and, perceiving that Candida was somewhat restored, he gave the signal for departure.

This time no Indian could be found to carry the little "sorceress" with golden hair and emerald eyes. They firmly believed that to take her in their arms, and march forward in the darkness, was to invite certain destruction.

In the face of these superstitious fears, Papa-Capac could only shrug his shoulders.

"Well, then, it must be I who will carry her," said he.

"How many times," thought he, "have I not held her in my arms when she was smaller! And these idiots take her for a witch! . . . A fairy she might indeed be,—the loveliest and daintiest of fairies! . . . Ah, beloved child! nothing will ever erase from my heart the remorse I feel at the wrongs I have done thee!"

The Indians, however, who had not been brought up in France, held to their own opinions

concerning Candida, and their fears were not allayed by the frightful storm, which now suddenly burst over the Sierras. Enormous black clouds, which had been creeping along the sides of the mountain ever since morning, parted, and a shower of huge hailstones descended in fury on the company, as if to arrest them at the entrance of the pass, which was to lead them to the opposite side of the Cordilleras.

Unmoved by the madness of the elements raging around him, Papa-Capac strode rapidly on, carrying the little girl. He had covered her head with his cloak, and, sheltered from the storm, held close against the heart she had not ceased to love in spite of its disloyalty, Candida rested happy and content with the momentary repose and protection afforded her.

From time to time the Inca put aside the cloak, and smiled down upon her. But when the High Priest, who marched directly in front, chanced to glance backward, her God-father's countenance changed, and became so stern that Candida felt inclined to cry!

It was now late; the darkness would not permit a longer march; and the little troop stopped for the night in a miserable shelter of rocks, hidden in a hollow between two mountains; they ate a few grains of maize and drank a few mouthfuls of water, and went to sleep.

The next day at dawn the Inca and his followers resumed their march to rejoin the main body of the army, which it was supposed had by this time reached its destination.

They were now descending the northern slope of the Crucero. The country, though still wild, was no longer covered with snow; they had left the regions of perpetual ice and snow far behind; a stream which had tumbled down the mountain, leaping from rock to rock, like a frolicsome child, now flowed quietly in a lovely valley among groves of mimosa. After fording the stream and traversing for some miles a district thickly covered with forests of thorny growths, they began to ascend a rocky elevation, which showed some evidences of having been once a road,—but a road of the remotest antiquity.

At last, after many turnings and windings amid huge blocks of stone, thrown one upon another, without apparent design, as if by some earthquake, they arrived at a great natural arena, or circular plain, which it would have been impossible to find without previous knowledge of its location.

On all sides of this circle rose colossal buildings of stone, some forming streets and squares, and others deep excavations in the rock. Here, majestic temples with grand stairways; there, gigantic palaces, with vast echoing halls; houses, some of them several stories in height, of an architecture that would not have seemed out of place in Paris or Vienna; all without doors or windows, and seemingly uninhabited from the commencement of the world!

This was the "*City of the Demons.*"

It is not rare to find in Peru, especially in the region of the Andes, the remains of cities, like this, cut in the rock by Indian architects and sculptors of the times of the Incas. But none offer so striking and interesting an example as

this "*City of the Demons*," so called because, according to native tradition, it was built in a single night by Genii, at the command of Manco-Capac, on the spot at which he made his first halt after leaving the "Island of the Sun," in Lake Titicaca, to bring civilization to Peru.

At his mandate the stones, obedient to the mighty charms of the Sun, hastened to place themselves all carved and fitted, one upon another; thus rose by the sole power of the divine word these enormous buildings, similar in many ways to the architectural wonders of ancient Egypt.

Here were huge giants lying on the earth with roughly carved features; single shafts, standing isolated by themselves, crowned with a sort of turban and vaguely resembling a human face; long rows of "menhirs," or upright stones, ranged like priests in a procession,—nothing was lacking to the Demon City to complete its resemblance to those ruins of our own ancient countries which exhibit the first rude attempts at architecture of primitive man.

All of these figures, whether standing or recumbent, had their legend; they were believed to be the original inhabitants of the land, who were a race of Giants with long ears, which hung down on their shoulders, whom Manco-Capac had, in a moment of displeasure, turned into stone because they refused to believe in his mission. Here and there in the centre of the immense area (made, no doubt, by the action of waters), there rose great masses of stone more than one hundred feet in height, shaped like the walls and pylons of Karnac, and obelisks whose points seemed to pierce the clouds. Temples there were also, low and massive, without windows, and palaces whose foundations made of indestructible stones laid without cement, suggested the works of the Cyclops.

Even the dwelling houses, though much smaller and less imposing, offered in their interior a spectacle worthy of admiration. In these imperishable buildings, which no human foot had entered for centuries, were found spiral staircases encircling a central shaft, as a serpent might

encircle a tree; in the sleeping rooms were benches, seats, couches, tables, and baths,—all cut out of the solid rock, by artists whose names will never be known. . . .

After being abandoned for so many centuries, the Demon City was now to awake from its sleep. To witness the life and movement now once more animating the ruins, one would have said that Manco-Capac, the national Hero, had once more returned to earth, and taken up his triumphal march from the Island of the Sun to his imperial city of Cuzco.

But fifteen days had elapsed since Papa-Capac had established his headquarters here, yet already the Demon City had the appearance of a real Capital.

As if it had needed only a wave of the Inca's golden wand to bring back the vanished world, —the old civilization of the country seemed to have returned in all its completeness.

The ancient prophecies so often repeated and so often doomed to be disproved by events, seemed now about to be realized. The tyranny

of the invaders was about to end, and, while off there, far away on the borders of the great ocean, their oppressors were fighting each other, the conquered race might now lift its head!

Thousands of Indians with skins as brown as nuts, coming from all parts of the Sierra, circulated through the great streets of the temporary capital.

And, as in the "Palace of the Sleeping-Beauty," all these men, who seemed to have been aroused from the sleep of three centuries, fell at once into the ranks, and performed the offices which had belonged to their ancestors.

Here, the Amautas, or Sages, dressed in long robes of black wool, explained gravely to the young disciples grouped around them the mysteries of the ancient Peruvian science.

There, went by, on their way to the trial field, the young nobles who aspired to the honours of chivalry. They wore white tunics, on which was embroidered a kind of ornament resembling a cross, and were easily recognized by their long gold ear-rings, which hung down as far as their shoulders.

These youths were destined to form the body-guard of Papa-Capac. After their enrollment, and the trials which accompanied it, such as sword exercise, wrestling, running and vaulting, a crown of flowers was placed upon their heads, and they were given sandals of the finest leather, and were supposed, thereafter, to belong to the sacred "corps d'élite."

Elsewhere might be seen a "Curaca" or "Cacique," a chief of a nation formerly conquered by the Incas, who came to do homage. A crowd assembled about the steps where the ceremony took place, and after each phrase pronounced by the Curaca the by-standers shouted:

"Hailli! Hailli! Hailli!"

Sometimes the Emperor also deigned to show himself to his subjects in all the splendour of his supremacy! He was borne in a litter decorated with the feathers of the paroquet in all colours, enriched with gold and silver. Before him marched his household servants, in gay liveries of many colours, like the coat of Harlequin. Behind came the "Guards," some armed with battle-axes of gold or silver, others with two-

edged swords, whose handles sparkled with precious stones.

As the imperial procession passed, the Indians prostrated themselves in the dust; it would have been death to raise the eyes to the august face of the sovereign.

When the Inca left the palace it was usually to go to the temple of the Sun, and never was his brow more clouded than on these occasions.

This temple, built of Cyclopean blocks of stone, in the shape of a horseshoe, had at the rear of the sanctuary a splendid and glittering image of the God, of which each separate ray was a great blade of gold.

So long abandoned for the worship of a strange god, Inti-Churi now beheld his temple crowded, its pavements covered by kneeling multitudes!

On each day when the Sun, free from mists or vapours, shone with unclouded radiance upon the Sierra, Iri-Yaqui, dressed in black, his head wrapped in a black turban, searched with eagerness the sacrifices to discover from them the secrets of the future.

While he announced to the prostrated worshippers the will of the deity, his glassy eye was fixed continually upon the sombre and moody face of the sovereign.

It became for Papa-Capac a veritable obsession, from which he could not escape. He, whose power over his subjects was supreme, and without limit, was still obliged to bow before the yet higher authority of the High Priest.

From hour to hour some veiled allusion of the Pontiff reminded him of the obligations which he had thus far eluded, by remaining in the City of the Demons.

Following the hardships of the journey across the mountains, little Candida had suffered a severe inflammation of the lungs. To leave her to the care of the Indians who hated her would have been to consign her to certain death. To take her with him on another journey would have been equally dangerous. Papa-Capac, tender of heart and undecided of will, finally prolonged his stay in the city, awaiting her recovery.

Instead of confiding her, sick as she was, to the

mercy of Tapou-Tambou, or others among his followers, who would have treated her with cruelty, he had retained her near him; had her eat at his table, and watched over the frail little girl as if she had been his own child.

But in spite of the various pretexts alleged by the Inca as justifying this delay, the strangeness of his course had not escaped the notice of those about him. The most indulgent spoke of "feebleness of character," but there were others, led by Tapou-Tambou, who did not hesitate to whisper the word "*Traitor!*"

The most clear-sighted of all was the High Priest. Admitted at all times to the palace in consideration of his sacred office, he watched the household of the Inca with a gloomy eye.

The innocent graces of Candida had no power to touch his withered heart, in which religious fanaticism and ferocious hatred of the whole white race struggled for mastery.

The convalescence of the child, attended only by ignorant native physicians, was long; the weather was still too rigourous to permit of her

being exposed to the air, and Papa-Capac, obstinate, as all weak persons are once they have taken a resolve, and are set on a course of action, tolerated no interference in the matter.

The situation was serious. Indian herdsmen from the Sierras had brought the news that an army of Chinese was approaching the city. All might be lost by further delay!

At last there came a day when, not content with threats muttered between his old teeth, Iri-Yaqui burst out openly with denunciations of the Inca. He was supported by Tapou-Tambou and the Indians, who, swayed by his words, were prepared to obey him blindly, and new dangers beset the generous Inca and his little God-daughter.

CHAPTER IX

THE ANGER OF INTI-CHURI

THE Winter solstice was approaching,—a period of mourning and lamentation for the subjects of the Inca.

At this season their shining and resplendent God, the glorious Sun, Father and Nourisher of all living things, seems to withdraw from the earth, which, till now, he has warmed with his rays.

In vain, wretched mortals, shivering with cold, groan and lift beseeching hands towards him.

Inti-Churi, offended by their numberless sins, closes his ears to their prayers; his face, dim and lurid, is seen only through dense veils of fog, and his mighty voice, reverberating among the deep gorges of the Sierras, speaks to them only in storms, reminding them of their wrong-doings and their crimes.

One can imagine with what impatience Iri-Yaqui, absorbed in his dark designs, awaited the

coming of the dread day,—the shortest day of the year.

About a week before the solemn anniversary, he proclaimed a general Fast; an easy observance in ordinary times for Indians, whose usually frugal fare consists of potatoes and hard maize, but very unacceptable now after the period of feasting which had followed their painful march through the snows.

There was a universal outcry among the subjects of Papa-Capac, and the popularity of the Inca suffered in consequence.

It was given out by the emissaries of the High Priest that it was on his account that the great Expiation was to be made. Iri-Yaqui's followers went from group to group, and from one part of the city to another, spreading perfidious and injurious reports concerning the Inca.

Though still treated with outward respect,—(for punishment quick and prompt as lightning would have been the portion of any one failing in due reverence of manner), he was odiously slandered behind his back.

While Papa-Capac despised such machinations, he was far from underestimating their effect; and it was with grave anxiety, not only for himself, but for her he called his adopted child, that he beheld the dawn of the fatal Day.

The morning rose cloudy; a thick mist,—ominous portent,—shrouded all the surrounding mountains; and when these were partly dissipated, the sun shone through dark clouds, fierce and red, like an angry eye, inflamed by sickness!

Standing on the steps of the Temple, dressed in the black robe with which we are acquainted, the High Priest looked down over an immense multitude of Indians, prostrated before the sanctuary.

For a long time he stood motionless, calm and severe; not a muscle of his rigid features moved. At the appointed time he made a sign, and two young girls from among the Priestesses of the Sun, modestly advanced.

One carried a small cup of gold, exquisitely chiselled, which contained a few tufts of dry cot-

ton. The other held in her hand a concave mirror, the handle of which was formed of twisted serpents of silver.

In accordance with the ancient religious rites of the Incas, the sacred fire was to be obtained by concentrating the rays of the Sun upon the cotton.

But today the experiment failed. Each time that the High Priest held the mirror over the cotton, the Sun hid his face in clouds. . . . The displeasure of the God was but too manifest, and after the third trial, as prescribed by the ritual, the High Priest restored the mirror to the young Priestesses.

A murmur of consternation rose from the multitude. All these superstitious souls, in whom Christianity had not effaced the old beliefs, were terror-stricken.

Seated on a throne at the right of the High Priest, Papa-Capac made no movement; but an almost imperceptible smile of contempt played over his lips.

Two sacrificial priests next appeared, wear-

ing long garments of red, which left their arms bare to the shoulder. They led with them a young llama of six months, whose hairy coat was a soft golden brown. The poor animal, not knowing what was to befall it, lifted its long neck, snuffed the air, and gazed quietly on the assembled multitudes with its mild, stupid eyes.

As the young creature stretched its gentle head out towards the High Priest, as if to caress him, Iri-Yaqui, holding in his hand a sharpened pebble of the stone called Obsidian, struck it on the forehead.

The little llama sank on the pavement; but as the blow of the feeble and aged High Priest had not been mortal, the assistants were obliged to dispatch the animal.

Again a shudder of dismay ran through the spectators. There could be no worse omen than this! It was apparent that Inti-Churi refused their offering!

Cries and groans now burst forth on all sides. It was clear that the anger of the God rested upon his people, and the hand, which had chastised

them so harshly for three centuries, was again raised to strike.

No! No! . . . It could not be so! The nation had not done aught to offend since its escape from slavery; and if there were a guilty *one*, no matter how exalted his station, he must come forward and publicly confess his sins!

In an instant the name of Papa-Capac was on every lip, and the words, suggested beforehand by the spies of the High Priest, was shouted by every mouth. . . .

"Let the Inca confess! Confess! Confess!"

This was an ancient ordeal from which it was impossible even for an Inca to escape; to it he must submit, as well as the humblest of his subjects. At certain seasons of the year, especially at the summer and winter solstices, the entire Indian nation, under the auspices of the priests, was accustomed to make a general confession; this confession was made in public, in the presence of all the people, after which the penitent was accorded absolution.

Listening to the clamours which demanded

this humiliation, Papa-Capac smiled bitterly. In the short period of his reign,—less than a month,—he had learned to estimate the capricious and unreliable character of his people, and was well aware of the rancour and jealousy that had been aroused among them.

But, superior as he knew himself to be, feeling infinitely above the ignorant herd which surrounded him, disdaining the base passions by which they were actuated,—and counting also upon his prestige to carry him successfully through any conflict that might arise between himself and the High Priest,—he offered no objection.

Rising from his throne, he came forward, standing erect and proud at the summit of the stairs, which descended from the Temple to the crowded square, and looking sternly down upon the angry multitude beneath him, with arms crossed upon his breast, with firm look and ringing tones the Inca opened his heart before his people.

CHAPTER X

THE INCA'S CONFESSION

"HEAR me, ye mountains, whose summits pierce the clouds; ye deep Valleys and snowy Plains! Hear me, ye Birds of the Air; Condors, who soar from peak to peak of the Sierras; Owls, who hide in dark recesses of the caverns; hear me, ye Wild Beasts that roam the forests,—and ye, my People, hear me! I come to confess my sins.

"There was a time when I sat tranquil, dreaming pleasant dreams, and leaned my head on my hands. Then the groans of my people came to me.

"Men of the Sierras, the lash of the Spaniard has cut bleeding scars on your backs; you have scratched with your nails the hard ground, to raise harvests that were not for you, but for your masters.

"You have left your villages in long troops, like beasts of burden, to toil in the dark ravines

of the mountains,—and you returned never again to the light!

"And I heard a voice, a voice from Heaven, which said: 'The Children of Inti-Churi have suffered enough. Awake! Inca, Child of the Sun, descendant of Manco-Capac . . . Awake! . . . Go forward! It is thou who art first of thy race. It is thou who art to lead them. The whites have taught thee to read in the sacred books of knowledge; they have showed thee how to curb the wild torrents of the mountains by throwing bridges across their rebellious waters; from them you have learned to make roads of iron on the steep paths of the mountain sides. . . . Arise, Papa-Capac! Go forward. All that they have taught thee turn thou against them to help thy race. It is the will of thy God!'

"And I gave heed to the voice which spoke. I closed my ears to the insidious pleadings of the tyrants, who said to me: 'Leave the ignorant masses of thy countrymen who labour and suffer. You are no longer one with them. They are no longer your people.' I listened not to their

words. I came to you. I raised you from the earth, from slavery. Is there a man among you who regrets the bread soaked with tears that he ate under the pitiless eye of the taskmasters?'

"I led you forth; I guided you through the snowy solitudes of the Crucero, and you followed me as a child follows his father. Who of you has seen me eat, when you were hungry? Who has seen me warm, when you shivered? . . . Who saw me sleep, when you watched?

"Men of the Sierras, my conscience is clear, my heart is pure. If I wash my hands in the water-spring they stain not the water,—it runs still as pure and bright as silver!

"To those who accuse me, and who send words like poisoned arrows among my people, I say, looking fearlessly up to the face of the Father of all, '*May the Sun judge between us!*' "

But the Sun did not reply to the fervid appeal of his Child.

Instead of showing approval by a beaming face, resplendent with dazzling light, he wrapped himself in black clouds which sent de-

spair to the hearts of the superstitious Indians.

The High Priest, cool and calm outwardly, was inwardly exulting. He now ordered them to bring the "Stone of Pardon." This was a sort of ball of red stone, which it was the custom to break after each "confession."

With one blow of the instrument used on such occasions, it flew apart. The inferior priests threw themselves upon it, eager to secure the fragments, which were valued as charms. . . . Alas! nothing could be more unlucky! The "Stone of Pardon" had merely separated in two halves. . . . Oh, misfortune! . . . Oh, despair! . . . The God actually refused to accept the confession of the Inca,—and denied him absolution. Wailings resounded on all sides.

Even Papa-Capac was overwhelmed. Educated as he was in all the science of the whites, the old faith of his ancestors still had a lodging in the bottom of his heart. He believed in the worship of the Sun as firmly as he believed in his own mission.

"The God has spoken!" cried Iri-Yaqui

triumphantly; "his will is clearly declared. Listen, my people. My tongue till now has been sealed,—it shall now throw off its bonds. It is not the Inca who is culpable."

"And who, then, is?" exclaimed Tapou-Tambou,—ferocious as usual.

"He is not culpable," repeated firmly the High Priest, who felt it as yet to his interest to protect Papa-Capac; "he is not the guilty one; he is the victim of a spell cast upon him by the young white maiden whom he has sheltered in his house."

"Yes! . . . Yes! . . . Death to the Sorceress! Death! Death!" shouted the Indians, who it was but too easy to turn against poor Candida.

"Her hour has not yet come," gravely replied Iri-Yaqui; "but it is needful to protect our revered Sovereign from the incantations by which she has enslaved his will. I demand that this maiden quit the dwelling of the Inca, and that she be placed in my hands as a hostage. Her magic artifices will be of no avail against the

representative on earth of the all-powerful Inti-Churi."

A universal acclamation rose from the crowd, as if to endorse the words of the High Priest. The people evidently approved; they meant to convey to their sovereign that he must yield to the wishes of the Pontiff. But the pride of Papa-Capac revolted at being placed in such a position. Springing up, he left the throne on which he had sunk, disheartened, a moment before, and again advancing to the front of the temple stairs, he braved the threatening multitudes at his feet.

"Give up that helpless child to be the victim of your ignorance and brutality?" cried he; "no, never! Never!"

"Think well, Inca, it is your crown that is at stake!" whispered the High Priest in his ear: "One word from me to those people,—and you are lost!"

"Speak the word, then!" said the unhappy young monarch, in utter desperation, while thousands of furious voices yelled:

"Death! Death! Death to the *Witch!*"

CHAPTER XI

THE BATTLE OF THE PLAZA-MANOR

All seemed lost. The Indian populace, inflamed by the words of the High Priest, and maddened by superstitious fears, was on the point of abandoning itself to the wildest excesses.

Already the more reckless had seized stones, and were running towards the Palace, prepared to immolate Candida as a sacrifice, which they hoped would appease the displeasure of their Father the Sun.

Papa-Capac, distracted, and beside himself with anxiety, wrung his hands in anguish. For the first time he doubted his people, and despaired of his mission,—and of himself!

And all the while there rose from the crowded Plaza, covered with dark heads as far as the eye could see, the ominous cry:

"Death! Death to the Sorceress!"

A few more seconds, and no power on earth

could have turned aside the current of popular fury; the Inca had sunk down hopelessly upon his throne, when, suddenly, the sound of a shot was heard, followed instantly by fifty or sixty others; the Inca sprang to his feet, and hastened once more to the portico of the Temple. Tapou-Tambou and other officers were there, together with the High Priest; the latter pointed silently to the heights which overlooked and dominated the Plaza; they were crowned with a white smoke. It was from there the fusillade had come, and a gust of wind which blew aside the smoke showed the keen-sighted Indians who were the foes so unexpectedly attacking them.

It was, in fact, the little Chinese army of Donna Bustamente, which, feeling its way cautiously, had at last discovered the trail of Papa-Capac, and, having followed it across the mountains, had taken advantage of the ceremonies of the winter solstice to attack the city.

At first all was indescribable confusion among the crowds collected in the great Plaza; the excitement and panic resembled, somewhat, the ef-

fect of an unexpected shower of rain falling suddenly in torrents upon the streets of a big city.

Posted as they were behind a natural rampart of rocks, the Chinese fired rapidly, and were able to aim with coolness and accuracy. Si-Sing had replaced his lost umbrella by a sword and directed the fire.

Already more than fifty Indians lay on the ground, dead or dying; the others had rushed to take shelter behind the heavy blocks of stone, placed, according to their tradition, by the divine power of their first Inca, Manco-Capac; and it was now that his descendant, the present Inca, —so recently distrusted and denounced,—regained completely the confidence and devotion of his subjects.

While Tapou-Tambou, bewildered by so sudden an attack, ran aimlessly about, here and there, shouting like a madman, the Inca did not for one instant lose his composure, and Iri-Yaqui, in spite of his prejudices, was forced more than once to nod his old head in approval.

The time which had elapsed since their arrival

at the Demon City had been by no means wasted, —as some were pleased to think. The Indians had been drilled, and some had been taught the use of European weapons; Papa-Capac had enrolled all the able-bodied men capable of bearing arms, in companies, each of which was commanded by its *Curaca* or *Cacique*.

So good was the discipline of this hastily organized force that when, upon an order from the Inca, the trumpets sounded, the various companies responded promptly, and formed in order, in spite of the incessant rain of bullets.

Danger seemed to have restored all his former strength and decision to the Inca. His character, so tender, and at times so lacking in firmness, became like a bar of iron in the presence of real peril.

He seemed to be everywhere at once, at all the most exposed points, and moved among his soldiers as calm and unmoved as if on parade.

At the first sound of the firing, Candida had run to the Temple; and, hidden behind a column, which partly protected her, she had followed

anxiously with her eyes the movements of the Inca's black and white plumes. Her poor little heart, so lovingly faithful to both her mother and her God-father, knew not what to hope for. . . . Alas, to pray for one seemed to pray against the other!

Tapou-Tambou, who held the position of Commander of the Inca's army, was boiling with impatience.

He shook his fist at the heights, which continued to pour down at each instant so deadly a fire, and shouted with bloodshot eyes:

"Inca, are you going to wait till we are all killed? If you keep on there will be none of us left to admire the sacred emerald when it hangs on your breast! . . . Say the word, and with my brave warriors I will exterminate these accursed Yellow-skins!"

But Papa-Capac shook his head, and wisely refused to authorize an assault, which, owing to the more advantageous position of the enemy, would have been fatal to the Indian army. He preferred to wait for some false move on the part

of his foe,—and this was not long in coming.

It was now five o'clock in the afternoon. The firing on each side had grown feeble and ineffective. The Indians, well sheltered, had recovered the apathetic calm, which is one of the characteristics of their race.

But in the camp of Donna Bustamente no such quiet prevailed. Si-Sing had much trouble in persuading his mistress against making an immediate descent upon the city.

His little squint eyes had scanned sharply the buildings surrounding the great square, and had detected the considerable forces hidden behind them.

"Let us remain where we are," said he: "we are in an excellent position, and they cannot dislodge us."

But, like Tapou-Tambou, in the other camp, the Señora was quivering with impatience. The corpses she saw lying here and there, on the square, inspired her with an exaggerated notion of her successes; and she had, moreover, an unlimited confidence in her own determination, and

in the cowardice of the Indians, whom she had so often chastised with her own little hands, without meeting the least resistance.

All at once, as the daylight was drawing to an end, she thought she saw, by the last rays of the fading light, the face of her beloved child—how pale and thin!—peeping out from behind the columns of the Temple. Candida was alive! She was there! . . . But a few feet separated them from each other! . . . And what if the bullets of her own soldiers should strike her child!

The thought was more than the impetuous feelings of the Corsican mother could endure; she instantly ordered her men to cease firing, and prepare to carry the city by assault. Two columns were formed, with the intention of attacking the place at two separate points. Donna Bustamente was in command of the first, and Si-Sing of the second of these detachments.

But the operation turned out more difficult than was at first expected; the Señora's men were compelled to make a long detour in reaching the



IT WAS AN ANCIENT WAR OF RACES THAT WAS BEING FOUGHT OUT ON THIS SECLUDED BATTLEFIELD

proper position, and Si-Sing had been defeated before they had even opened fire.

The unlucky Majordomo, advancing in the gathering twilight, rather against his will, had scarcely put foot on the Plaza when he received a tremendous blow from a sabre on the back of his neck at the very instant that he was calling upon his men to charge.

Seeing him fall, his followers turned their backs, and ran off in a general panic, Chao-tung, to whom the Señora had given such a vigorous blow of the whip, was the first to take to his heels.

The fighting on the part of the Señora's detachment had been much more serious. Donna Bustamente had directed her attack at the portico of the temple, where she had seen her daughter.

The conflict was furious; no quarter was given by either side. The Indians' roars of hatred were answered by frenzied yells from the Chinese.

It was an ancient war of races that was being fought out on this secluded battlefield, so lost in

the solitude of the Sierras, and both parties, oppressed as they had been by the Spaniards, took the opportunity afforded by the absence of their common enemy to exterminate each other.

A slender line of rose-colour, growing fainter each instant, was still to be seen in the western sky, where the sun had gone down, and the dim light showed the Indians bounding like wild beasts on their foes. Their extraordinary costumes appeared even more fantastic in the increasing darkness, which was beginning to envelope them.

Standing erect on the lowest step of the temple, the tall form of the Inca could be seen in the gloom; a tomahawk stained with blood was in his hand, and he watched with piercing eyes the furious groups struggling desperately at his feet; the mantle of feathers which he wore gave him somewhat the appearance of one of the gigantic Condors of the Sierras, which poise themselves majestically in the upper air before descending like a thunderbolt upon their chosen victim.

By the fitful light of the torches Donna Busta-

mente had seen him. A spasm of pain shot through her heart on recognizing the abductor of her child. Eluding an Indian, who had been pursuing her and endeavouring to intercept her, she ran towards the Inca.

At the sight of her, Papa-Capac leaped down to encounter the supposed soldier. But the Señora, who was wearing men's clothing, had all of a man's courage. She fearlessly and adroitly parried with her sword a blow from the tomahawk; at the same instant, using her revolver, she aimed straight at the Inca's heart,—and fired. The ball struck Papa-Capac squarely on the breast, but, encountering a gold ornament in the shape of a crescent which he wore, it glanced harmlessly off, inflicting merely a slight bruise.

(The Indians declared later that they had seen the ball rebound from the invulnerable person of their Emperor!)

It was the Señora's last bullet; her sword, broken to the hilt by the blow of the tomahawk, was useless, and she knew that she must now look death in the face.

But, separated forever from her adored child by the victory of the Indians,—why should she care to live? . . .

Felled to the ground by a blow, she sank down without resistance. The blade of a cutlass gleamed above her head—and she regarded it unflinchingly. Suddenly she saw in the fierce eyes of her adversary a look of recognition; the burning glance fixed upon her, softened, and recoiling a step, Papa-Capac murmured in the Spanish language so execrated by the Indians:

"No! . . . I will not shed this innocent blood! How can I slay a mother whose child I have stolen?"

He pointed silently into the surrounding shadows, and rising, without a word, Donna Bustamente disappeared in the darkness.

The battle was over, and the victory of the Indians was complete.

It had been due not only to the courage and firmness of Papa-Capac, but fully as much to his wise forethought, and the preparations made in advance by him. On this point all were agreed,

—even the High Priest; but there were many, including Tapou-Tambou, who blamed him severely for his clemency in allowing the Señora to escape; and as these malcontents became insolent and violent in their clamour, the Inca strode towards them, stern and resolute.

Throwing aside his mantle, and displaying the golden crescent on his breast, which had served to protect him, he cried:

"Could I, without offending the divine pity of the Gods, kill a mother? Answer! Reply to me, O my Mother Quilla . . . thou who reignest in the Heavens when my Father the Sun is away!"

Perhaps the words of the Inca, inspired by so ardent a faith, passed beyond the atmosphere which wraps our earth, and penetrated to the celestial spaces! . . . To so earnest an appeal what "mother" could remain indifferent?

The clouds which covered the sky melted softly; they glided apart, like curtains, and in the open heaven was seen the radiant face of the Moon. Her rays fell glittering on the golden

crescent, and revealed her sparkling emblem to the eyes of all.

This time the Gods were favourable to Papa-Capac. The Indians prostrated themselves on the ground with their faces on the blood-stained earth; while Iri-Yaqui, surrounded by his priests, and the beautiful Priestesses of the Sun, intoned a hymn of praise to the Goddess Quilla.

When this was ended, Papa-Capac once more addressed his people:

"Children of the Sierra," said he: "the sword has done its work, and my Mother Quilla has blessed our victory. Return now to your places in the city. Secure your prisoners, and take your rest. Tomorrow at dawn I will lead you on our quest of the Sacred Emerald."

CHAPTER XII

THE MIRACULOUS ESCAPE OF SI-SING

THE Inca had been too hasty in announcing a departure on the following day. The necessary preparations required more time than he had anticipated.

The Plaza, on which the battle had taken place, was strewn and encumbered with the dead. Attracted by such an unusual feast, flocks of foul carrion birds fluttered over it in clouds. No matter how great his anxiety to be gone, even Iri-Yaqui was aware that it would be impossible to evacuate the City of Demons until the rites of burial had been solemnized over those who had fallen in the sacred cause.

Tapou-Tambou was the officer on whom the duty devolved, and he performed it with his usual coarse brutality.

There was, however, one portion of his task which Tapou-Tambou accomplished with a

painstaking care that would have been truly praiseworthy, had it not been prompted by a fiendish malice.

Although the Inca had spared the life of the Señora, Tapou-Tambou cherished the hope that she might have fallen, struck by some stray bullet, and he would find her among the dead.

As each corpse was lifted, he came hurriedly forward to examine the countenance, and each time a gesture of ferocious disappointment escaped him. The Señora was not there. And, although he had taken every precaution to arrest her flight, it was clear that she had escaped; and who could tell what trouble her energy and determination might yet cause to her victors?

The burial operations had been conducted with so much vigour that towards the close of the day there remained only one more pile of dead. These were nearly all Chinese, and they lay, heaped up, in a corner near the spot where Si-Sing had so ingloriously fallen.

Among all these yellow faces, which so strongly resembled each other, it would have re-

quired a sharp eye to distinguish our friend, the Superintendent. Deprived of his spectacles and his umbrella, there was nothing to mark him as in any way different from his poor countrymen. "*At the grave all men become equal!*" So says the illustrious Confucius; and once again the favourite author of Si-Sing has enunciated a brilliant truth.

One after the other the Chinese, killed in defending their mistress, or in running away, were carried to the trench, into which they were unceremoniously thrown with no regard to the posture they had assumed in falling. . . . There remained but one, and he was about to follow the road taken by his comrades, when the Indian who had hold of his legs felt them tremble. The idea that the dead man was returning to life terrified him, and he cried out:

"Master! Master! . . . *This corpse is alive!*" shouted he.

The first act of Tapou-Tambou on hearing this remarkable intelligence was to shrug his shoulders, and the next was to bestow a whack on the

back of the informant. The Indian, feeling that it might be safer to deal with the dead than with the living, once more took up the feet of the corpse. But he instantly received from them a vigourous kick in the stomach, which caused him to relax his grasp, and the supposed corpse having fallen to the ground, sneezed several times violently—(without, as you may imagine, any one troubling themselves to say, "God bless you!"), after which the dead man opened his eyes, and looking somewhat dazed, as if he did not quite understand what was going on around him,—slowly sat up.

It was Si-Sing himself,—the great, the fat, the glorious Si-Sing in person, returned as if by a miracle from the portals of the tomb! The sabre-cut, which he had received the day before, had not terminated his career, though it had come perilously near doing so. The thick braid of false hair, which he wore ever since the loss of his own beautiful queue, had caused the blade to slip, and he had escaped with nothing more serious than a prolonged fainting fit.

Tapou-Tambou ground his teeth at the sight of his old enemy.

"He's dead! He's dead, I tell you!" he thundered. "Throw him in the ditch with the others!"

The Indians, whom this singular spectre appalled, recoiled, and hesitated to obey, while Si-Sing, in a voice trembling with emotion, endeavoured to protest.

"It seems to me," moaned he, "that when a man tells you he is not dead, the least you can do is to believe him!"

But "*None so deaf as those who will not hear*," is a proverb even among the Chinese; and, although Si-Sing shouted:

"Hold on! Hold on! I tell you I am alive! . . . " Tapou-Tambou paid no heed to his appeals. He was determined to complete his task of burying all the Chinese,—dead or alive; and even supposing that a sentiment of pity could have found a place in his ignorant, savage mind, it would not have been Si-Sing to whom mercy would have been shown.

"By Manco-Capac!" said he, "if one were to listen to those chaps over there, there is not one of them who would consent to be dead! Hand me my club; and since this great, fat fool has the impudence to say he is alive,—I will soon convince him to the contrary! . . ."

One of those who looked on,—there are always some to be found ready to execute such orders,—presented him with the weapon he called for, and he brandished it over the head of the Chinaman.

Saved as it were, by a miracle, from the jaws of the grave, Si-Sing was apparently doomed to meet death for a second,—and last time. Crouched on his heels, with haggard eyes, he awaited his end. But the fatal blow did not fall; a vigourous hand seized the arm of Tapou-Tambou just as it was about to launch its victim into eternity. It was Papa-Capac himself, who, while engaged in inspecting the battlefield, had been attracted by the sound of his general's violent voice, and had drawn near in time to prevent the stain of another murder disgracing his new government.

"Stop!" said he. "The time of slaughter is passed; and the dawn of divine mercy shines in the sky!"

"As long as there is left a single one of those yellow dogs upon earth, there will be no peace for the Children of the Sun!"

"The Children of the Sun," replied Inca disdainfully, "soar too high in the heavens to be aware of the existence of such a contemptible creature as that. What notice does the eagle of the mountains take of the insect squatting beneath a grain of sand which suffices for its shelter and completely covers it?"

This highly figurative language did not make much impression upon Tapou-Tambou; but, at a sign from Iri-Yaqui, he tossed away his club, but not without giving vent to his displeasure in violent words.

"Inca," growled he, "you are playing a dangerous game! Have your people suffered so long only to see the sweetness of their vengeance taken out of their mouths? Have we, by the force of our arms, shaken off the yoke of the white

tyrants to be disciplined by a presumptuous and wilful young man?"

Papa-Capac vouchsafed no reply; he made a slight gesture with his hand, as if to brush away a painful thought that pursued and irritated him, and turned his back contemptuously upon the Grand-Judge. He, beside himself with rage at such treatment, was about to burst forth anew, when Iri-Yaqui restrained him by a look.

"Let the boy alone," said he in a low tone of voice. "The time has not come to put a curb on his whims, and it is written that he alone is to conduct us to the Emerald."

"But this Chinaman! . . ." stammered Tapou-Tambou, who could not bring himself to forego his revenge.

"Pooh! What do you care?" replied Iri-Yaqui. "He is not worth raising a foot to crush! . . . Take him for a slave, and no doubt you can make his life harder to bear than death!"

"You are always right, Iri-Yaqui," said Tapou-Tambou, laughing brutally; "I need a cook

at this moment, he will be just the thing! Down on your knees, slave!" said he, addressing Si-Sing, "and thank his Serene Eminence, the High Priest, for your life, which is granted to you at his request."

At this unexpected turn of affairs truth compels us to say that Si-Sing did not comport himself with the dignity of demeanor which might have been expected of him. The Orientals meet death, when once it becomes inevitable, with an admirable composure; but that does not mean that they do not appreciate the sweetness of existence. Si-Sing, in particular, had a deep regard for himself, and the idea of quitting life in the flower of his age was most distressing. On learning, therefore, that he was to be spared, he manifested the wildest joy, rolling on the ground in his enthusiasm. He even went so far as to crawl forward, and attempt to kiss the black slippers of the High Priest. But Iri-Yaqui repulsed him by a violent kick:

"Away! filthy wretch!" cried he. "All the waters of Titicaca will not suffice to purify my person from your contact! . . . Begone!"

Si-Sing, taught by experience, did not attempt to renew his offensive exhibition of gratitude, but contented himself with listening humbly to the instruction of the fierce Tapou-Tambou.

"From now on," said he, "you are to be my cook. Your back and your ears will suffer if you fail in your duties. Remember simply that I am hard to please, and that I am accustomed to dine when the red disc of the Sun touches the edge of the horizon."

Si-Sing signified that he understood, but could not resist hazarding an observation:

"How will I know at what time the red disc of the Sun has touched the horizon, when the day is cloudy?"

"That is your affair, and not mine," said Tapou-Tambou.

"Very good, my lord,—but one more question. . . . What are your favourite dishes? . . ."

"Silence!" shouted the Grand-Judge: "one more word, and your life shall answer for it!"

Si-Sing was intimidated, but not for long. He was a good deal like certain children who persist in tormenting their elders with questions, until a good box on the ears suddenly closes their small mouths.

"Excuse me, my dear Master," said he presently, in his most insinuating tones, "but may I not ask whether you eat with chop-sticks like the Chinese, or with forks like the Europeans?"

"With my fingers, wretch!" roared Tapou-Tambou, and this time so great was Si-Sing's terror that he fled to the kitchen of his master without daring to ask any further questions.

CHAPTER XIII

SI-SING AS CHEF DE CUISINE

With a master like Tapou-Tambou, it does not do to trifle; and with the assistance of half a dozen Indians, who acted as scullions, the major-domo went immediately to work.

He had never prepared a dinner in his life, but he had great confidence in his own abilities, and he was of the opinion that a man,—above all a Chinaman,—ought to be able to accomplish anything he sets out to do.

With such views one goes far! . . . Full of noble assurance, he ordered the kitchen utensils brought to him. They consisted of one enormous kettle of earthenware, which would contain four or five quarts of liquid. This was filled three parts full of water and placed, propped up by two stones, over a fire made of dried llama's dung, after which nothing remained to be done but to assemble the ingredients for a savoury

stew, something like the "navarino" of potatoes common among the Indians of the Sierra.

Now, Si-Sing was a good Chinese,—an excellent Chinese,—and naturally was incapable of appreciating anything other than the national taste of China!

Chinese cooking was to his mind the only kind worthy the approval of a person of taste. He resolved, therefore, to win the esteem of his ferocious master by serving him a feast in true Chinese style.

A lank, emaciated dog, which chanced to pass by, was seized by the new cook, and in the twinkling of an eye was stripped of his skin and thrown into the sauce pan. Pale with horror, the Indians looked with staring eyes at this infernal commencement; but Si-Sing was not accustomed to consider public opinion, and with gravity and perfect composure he continued his operations.

"Go find me some earth-worms," was his next command.

All the servants ran to obey, without suspecting the object of the singular order. In about

an hour they all returned, bringing with them enough worms to supply the fish-hooks of all the fishermen of the Blue River. Si-Sing signified that he was satisfied, and after carefully sorting out the plumpest, the kettle was enriched by the addition of a new ingredient. On the part of the Indians it was no longer disgust, but absolute consternation—which became prostration when they beheld Si-Sing produce a bottle of castor oil, and pour from it at least a couple of table-spoonsful into the kettle, and, after tasting the mixture, exhibit the liveliest satisfaction.

"If Tapou-Tambou is not pleased with this," thought he, inhaling the steam of the mixture,—"it must be because he has a really detestable disposition!"

At the hour when "the burning disc of the Sun touches the horizon" Tapou-Tambou arrived; he was, if possible, in a worse humour than usual.

"Is the dinner ready?" enquired he in a voice hoarse with rage.

The Chinaman bowed profoundly, smiled till

the corners of his mouth almost touched his ears, —and lifted the lid of the kettle.

A singular smell floated on the air . . . not unlike the various odours of a drug-shop. Bending over the stew, Si-Sing sniffed with ecstacy the steam which escaped from it; but Tapou-Tambou seemed less enthusiastic. However, he was not prepared to decide definitely as to the merits of the new cook's "chef-d'oeuvre" without tasting it.

"*Serve the dinner!*" said he in a commanding tone.

He was obeyed with alacrity. Si-Sing himself selected what he deemed the most delicate morsels, and placed on his master's plate the back of the dog, reposing on a soft puree of earth-worms.

Alas! What a dinner! What an absolutely infernal dinner! Tapou-Tambou took one mouthful, and uttered a howl as agonized and prolonged as that of the dog whose remains he had tasted.

In spite of his terror, Si-Sing could not help laughing at the effects of a real Chinese delicacy upon an Indian of the Sierra!

What ignorance! What lack of taste in these barbarians who were pretending to restore the ancient civilization of Peru!

It had been not so much the dog as the odour of the castor oil with which it was impregnated that had so upset the nerves of Tapou-Tambou.

After giving vent to his rage by inarticulate roars, he signed to the Indians to seize the unfortunate major-domo, who was forthwith dragged before him.

"Wretch!" said the Grand-Judge, "you have tried to poison me. Confess your crime, or you shall die!"

One can afford to be calm when one is innocent! Si-Sing, his eyes raised to heaven with the expression of a martyr about to die for his faith, replied:

"The Emperor of China, himself, never had a better dinner cooked. I have placed before you all that the most fastidious epicure could desire, and my only regret is that I was unable to add a few smoked sharks' fins and a few birds' nests."

"Do you dare to mock me?" shouted Tapou-

Tambou, who, having swallowed some of the liquid, began to experience some uncomfortable sensations. . . . "Here! my faithful bodyguard, take him, and give him fifty blows of the stick on the soles of his feet. . . . I mean, of course, fifty on each foot!" he added with a sardonic smile.

Si-Sing, whose recurring misfortunes were teaching him fortitude, made no resistance. What was the use of arguing with a man so lacking in taste as to fail to appreciate the charm of Celestial cookery? He was thrown on the ground, rather more violently than was necessary, and in this position he awaited his sentence. At the moment it was about to be executed, however, a diabolical idea came into the mind of Tapou-Tambou.

"Stop!" said he. "One hundred blows of the stick is too slight a punishment for this prisoner. I will, instead, inflict on him the tortures he intended for me, and will look on and enjoy the contortions of his livid countenance! *Bring the kettle.*"

The utensil was brought.

"Behold," said he to Si-Sing, "the horrible mixture by means of which you endeavoured to send me to my ancestors! But it is you who will depart. . . . You will go in my place!

"You shall swallow what you have treacherously prepared for your master. *Begin! Eat!*"

Tapou-Tambou expected a desperate resistance on the part of the yellow-skin; but nothing of the sort! With an expression of angelic satisfaction, Si-Sing sat down cross-legged in front of the kettle, and, armed with an enormous wooden spoon, he attacked its contents. Socrates, drinking the hemlock, showed neither more calmness nor resignation! Tapou-Tambou watched him, surprised that the poison failed to produce more immediate effects; the scullions stood around watching anxiously, and persuaded that they would behold Si-Sing presently fall in convulsions.

But the expected results did not take place. Nothing happened. Si-Sing accomplished his task imperturbably, to the very end, and the car-

cass of the canine, flavoured with castor oil, disappeared in his stomach without disturbing a muscle of his face.

The sicker of the two was Tapou-Tambou, who had but swallowed a mouthful. Without being able to account for the difference in its effects upon himself and the Chinese, the Grand-Judge was obliged to acquit his cook of intentional wrong doing; but as he was both unjust and ignorant, he determined to depose Si-Sing from the important position of cook, and relegate him to the gangs of slaves, who were used to transport the baggage, and who took the place of pack-horses in the army of the Inca Papa-Capac.

CHAPTER XIV

A CHINAMAN AMONG THE "RABONAS"

THE Peruvian army had, at this time, no knowledge of the very useful system of baggage transport. Pack-horses are rare in the Sierras, and the llamas, which are employed for this purpose, are incapable of carrying heavy burdens. It becomes necessary, therefore, to have recourse to other means of transporting provisions, ammunition, and even guns; for the Peruvian soldier, especially if he belongs to the Indian race, is a true "amateur" . . . he is willing to fight, but disdains to perform the duties of the commissariat, and he leaves the care and the burden of his arms and supplies,—to his wife!

Thus, every Peruvian army, particularly if operating in the Andes, is accompanied by a second army,—a feminine army,—less disciplined, but much more fully equipped, composed of a multitude of female comrades,—"soldatas" or

"rabonas," as they are called, who, when occasion requires, are no less brave and quite as ferocious as their husbands and brothers.

This state of things has obtained in other countries, and in other times. In the periods of the great invasions, the Barbarians, who descended by millions upon Italy, were always followed by their women, who chanted their praises when victorious, and reviled them if defeated, and at times took part, themselves, in the combats.

The Teutons, who were vanquished by the Roman Consul Marius about one hundred years before Christ, were less terrible to the Romans than their "rabonas,"—indomitable and reckless furies,—from whom they could only defend themselves by massacring them like their husbands. All honour to the rabonas of Peru, who perpetuate the war-like traditions of the gentler sex! . . . They wear for a head-dress some old police helmet, or perhaps nothing but their hair, usually quite unacquainted with the comb; their clothes are indescribable rags, over which they fasten an old belt with a sabre and a cart-

ridge box; their feet have no other covering than that which nature provides, which has been toughened by tramping over the rough mountain paths.

Add to the above accoutrements an ancient musket with a match-lock, which does not always work as reliably as might be wished, and you have a picture of the rabona, as they can be seen in the Peruvian Sierras today, and as they were seen at the time of my story, hastening in crowds to the camp of Papa-Capac.

The sight of them appalled Si-Sing. Dismissed abruptly from the terrestial paradise of Tapou-Tambou's kitchen, he was wandering mournfully and aimlessly about the City of Demons, looking for a place to lay his head, when chance led him to the quarter occupied by the rabonas.

Squatting around fires, which cast lurid reflections upon their repulsive features, these fierce women presented a fantastic appearance; as the light of the flames flickered over their hideous countenances, and their coarse black hair strag-

gling on their shoulders, they might have been taken, as they gesticulated wildly with their scrawny arms, for a band of witches making ready for some diabolical celebration. The colossal and strange buildings surrounding them added to the weird effect of the scene.

Si-Sing, who felt his heart quake with superstitious fears, was not in a mood to be impressed by the picturesque!

"It is astonishing," said he to himself, "that I, who detest complications, am always so tangled up in them! . . . I have but barely escaped with my life from the clutches of that villainous Ta-pou-Tambou, and here I have fallen into this wasp's nest that I see no way out of! . . . I wish I knew what Confucius would do to extricate himself from the dilemma if he were in my place. . . . but all these pretended sages have written their maxims while comfortably reposing on a couch, attended by a slave who refreshed them by gently waving a fan! I would like to hear what one of them would have to say if he were lost in this city of the Devil at night, in the

midst of this camp of crazy rabonas. . . . I say *confound* Confucius and all the rest of them!"

The soul of Si-Sing must indeed have been ulcerated to permit the utterance of such blasphemies against his revered philosopher. But it must be admitted that fate had not been indulgent towards him for some time past. What a string of misfortunes since the fatal night of his meeting with Papa-Capac!

His miseries began with the loss of his spectacles, his umbrella, and his lantern; three "fetiches" from which he had thus far never allowed himself to be separated, and the loss of which poisoned his existence. Then followed the assault on the house of Donna Bustamente, wherein he had, in spite of himself, taken a somewhat responsible part; then came the abduction of dear little Candida, the march across the Crucero in the snow; the battle on the Plaza, which, from the outset, had turned out so disastrously for him personally . . . and, finally, after narrowly escaping being buried alive, here he was,

roaming about at the dead of night, and falling into the hands of these hags, whose eyes glared on him like wolves out of the darkness.

When, within the memory of man, had such an avalanche of catastrophes ever fallen on any one Chinaman?

What was to become of him? What had he best do?

Si-Sing tottered from one group to another, like a man half drunk! He had gone too far to escape, and threats and growls on all sides forbade him equally to think of remaining! Exclamations, which there was no mistaking, resounded on all sides. The poor fellow did his best to assume an air of humility, but his politeness, instead of placating the dreadful old women, only excited their ire still more. One caught him by the coat tails; another thrust out her foot to trip him, a third amused herself by pricking him in the back with the point of her bayonet; and all the ladies, delighted by the unexpected entertainment, laughed till they waked the echoes of the Demon City; it needed only the

presence of Tapou-Tambou to make the festival complete!

Exhausted by his previous experiences, Si-Sing was incapable of entering with spirit into this last game which Dame Fortune was playing him,—a game in which the loss promised to be entirely on his side. . . . After having endured it as best he could for a few moments, he ended by staggering, like a vessel without ballast, and falling, fainting on the ground, while uttering one last despairing cry for help. From that instant he knew no more; he had a vague and strange impression of seeing the Señora Bustamente among the faces of the women who were grinning diabolically around him . . . but how could that be? How could the señora be altered all at once into a filthy, savage rabona? It seemed so impossible that Si-Sing felt he must have been mistaken; and his swoon prevented any further reflections.

CHAPTER XV

IN WHICH WE AGAIN SEE CANDIDA

WHEN Si-Sing recovered consciousness, he was lying on a mat in a lofty arched chamber, such as he had never before seen; a brilliant sunlight shone outside, and, seated close by, and looking at him with a gentle, loving smile,—was *Candida.*

At first he thought he must be dreaming. . . . But no, it was, indeed, his beloved little mistress, —her own lovely face, with its fine, delicate features, and her beautiful, large emerald eyes, from which suffering had not banished the angelic purity of expression!

On seeing her old Si-Sing open his eyes, she clapped her hands joyfully:

"There now! you are awake at last! Oh, how you frightened me! . . . I feared you would die if you were left with those people, and so my God-father had you brought here, and allowed me to nurse you till we leave."

The Chinaman made an effort to collect his thoughts and he gradually regained possession of his senses; but his head was still burning and his throat parched. His kind little nurse offered him a potion, which, she informed him, had been prepared by the High Priest in person, and was composed of mysterious plants gathered on the mountains at the time of the new moon. . . . And as Si-Sing hesitated, feeling no great confidence in either the benevolence or the skill of that personage, she held the cup to his lips, saying:

"Oh, you need not be afraid! The High Priest is a very kind and a very learned man. I should have died if he had not watched over me, and given me medicine. . . . My God-father says so,—and he knows."

She spoke of her persecutors with such an affectionate sweetness that Si-Sing, though not inclined to be sentimental, was melted to tears. With an impulse of tenderness not usual with him, he took the hand of the little girl,—such a thin, little hand, on which the blue veins were so clearly traced,—and kissed it fondly.

"Oh! the infernal scoundrels! . . . to think of sacrificing to their degraded superstitions this exquisite little creature, all love and gentleness. . . . There is not in the whole world another like her!"

Sordid and selfish as he was, Si-Sing could not think of such a crime without his whole being rising in revolt.

"Ah! if I only had them in my hands . . . your God-father as well as the rest,—I'd make once and for all such a stew out of their carcasses as would be remembered forever in this Sierra!"

"Sh!" . . . said Candida, laying her hand gently over his lips. "Let us talk about Mama: tell me where you left her, and when will I be allowed to see her? Mama! dear Mama! How sad she must be without me! . . ."

She burst into tears,—weeping more for her mother's sorrows than for her own sufferings.

She had been told nothing of what had occurred after the battle in the Plaza. As Si-Sing was silent, she grew alarmed:

"You do not answer, Si-Sing. Is it because Mama is dead, and you don't want to tell me? . . . Poor Mama! Your Candida will soon join you!"

"No, no!" said Si-Sing hastily, touched to the bottom of his heart by her words: "No, do not be alarmed, dear Candida. The Señora Bustamente is alive."

"She is alive? Then you must have seen her,—and you did not tell me! . . . You bad thing! I would not have believed that my old Si-Sing could have been so unkind!"

The Chinese was very much embarrassed. As he had witnessed the battle from beneath a pile of corpses, it was naturally somewhat difficult for him to give a lucid account of the engagement. But, again, how could he leave Candida a prey to an anxiety so cruel, which might, in her weakened condition, prove fatal. It was at this moment that he suddenly recalled having seen, as in a vision, a face resembling that of Donna Bustamente. But could it have really been hers? Could she have been there disguised as a ra-

bona? The idea was so strange that Si-Sing was excusable for being doubtful. The haughty wife of Colonel Bustamente wearing disgusting rags, and transformed into one of the women who followed the army of Papa-Capac, mingled with all that was low and vicious! What an extraordinary suggestion! On the whole the Chinese thought it more prudent to avoid a direct reply.

"She's alive . . . and that is all I can tell you at present."

"Did you talk with her?" asked Candida anxiously. "When will she come and get me? Why can't she give some money to these people, so that they will let me go back to Tarayaqui? What can they want of a poor little girl like me, who never did them any harm?"

"*A lie is sometimes like salve to a wound!*" says Confucius. Si-Sing could not explain to Candida the dark designs of the Indians and their fanatical leaders; he, therefore, extricated himself by a modification of the truth.

"I have seen your mother," said he; "I talked with her, and she sent a great deal of love to you."

"Are you telling me the truth, Si-Sing?"

"*The pure truth!*" said he.

"Oh! how happy I am! And when will I see her?"

"Very soon. In a few days we will all be together again at Tarayaqui. Your mother is going to offer a great big bag full of money to your God-father, and as soon as he has it, all will be arranged, and we will be good friends again, and live together at Tarayaqui, when your father, the Colonel, comes back from the war."

The Chinese are admirable liars,—and Si-Sing was an admirable Chinese! Candida drank in his words without the least suspicion; her own nature was so truthful and sincere that she was incapable of suspecting deceit.

At that moment, when Si-Sing was lying on the mat, leaning on his elbow, and telling his golden tales to the eager, happy, little child, fifty or more trumpets sounded a blast outside the palace, and Papa-Capac came hastily into the room, followed by Iri-Yaqui, the hideous Tapou-Tambou, and a retinue of Indians.

"Get ready, Candida,—get ready. The time of departure has come. You must mount your litter."

Candida, full of her dreams of return, asked joyously:

"Are we going back to Tarayaqui?"

Papa-Capac made no reply; but Tapou-Tambou laughed hoarsely:

"Tarayaqui?" said he: "we are far from there, —and we are going still farther! . . ."

The disappointment was so keen that Candida grew white as her namesake. She pressed her hand on her poor little heart, and would have fallen had not the Inca sprung forward to support her.

"Tapou-Tambou," said he furiously, "you shall account to me for these things some day!"

"Whenever you please!" was the insolent reply: "The sooner the better!"

"Leave my presence," said the Inca. "Go, take your place in the ranks."

Tapou-Tambou hesitated, but was about to retire reluctantly, when he caught sight of Si-

Sing, who, in spite of his own weakness, was endeavouring affectionately to assist Candida. The opportunity of doing a cruel act soothed him.

"I will not leave the room," said he, "till you have restored my slave to me."

He pointed to Si-Sing, who turned pale at the thought of again falling into the clutches of his enemy.

"Oh, God-father!" pleaded Candida: "Please let Si-Sing stay with me to keep me company!"

But this time Tapou-Tambou had right on his side.

"High Priest," said he, "since the Inca will not do me justice, I appeal to you."

Without a word Iri-Yaqui gravely signified his assent, and Si-Sing,—pity him, kind reader,—was pounced upon and led from the room by his former master.

CHAPTER XVI

SI-SING MEETS THE SEÑORA BUSTAMENTE

THE trumpets continued to sound their deafening summons. All was in readiness for departure; the various companies of Indian warriors formed up with more regularity than would have been expected of troops so recently recruited, and, one after another, they took up the march, led by the Curocas.

Si-Sing had, however, no time to admire the creditable discipline of Papa-Capac's new army. A couple of Indians, under Tapou-Tambou's orders, seized and dragged him roughly to where the baggage of the army was collected, and began to load him with as little ceremony as if he had been a mule. Before he knew where he was, he had on his right shoulder a bag of frozen potatoes, destined for the table of the Grand-Judge, and on his left a box of iron hammers and spikes, stolen from the work-shops of the railroad company; around his neck was hung a pair of old

boots that had belonged to Colonel Bustamente. He protested vehemently against being compelled to march so heavily laden, but a few blows from a gun-stock reconciled him to the necessity.

Thus burdened, he took his place among the rabble of Chinese slaves, vagabond Indians, and wild women, which formed the rear guard of the army. This promiscuous association was even more distressing to him than the weight of the potatoes and hammers! To have descended from the position of major-domo to that of llama! . . . what a fall!

Hustled and jostled; stunned by noise, and half-choked by vile stenches,—Si-Sing would have completely lost courage had he not found support and consolation in the wisdom of Confucius, whom he no longer abused, but regarded with all his former veneration. One maxim in particular had the effect of preventing a resort to desperate extremes, which his disastrous position might otherwise have prompted.

"*Suicide*," says the eminent Chinese moralist, "*is the only mistake that is irreparable!*"

Si-Sing thought well of this saying, and acted accordingly. But this did not prevent him from suffering extremely, nor from daily and hourly cursing the fate which had brought him to this "infernal Sierra!"

Between times, when he had leisure to think of other than his own trials, his mind turned towards his mistress, the Señora Bustamente, and he wondered what had become of her.

Would he be able to recognize her, even supposing her to be among this disorderly horde of women, clothed in fantastic and squalid finery,—whose faces, under the sweat and dust of a few hours of travel, became undistinguishable, even to the most scrutinizing eye. . . .

As for Candida,—he had lost sight of her altogether. She was not permitted to leave her litter, and each day, as they proceeded on their way, she was guarded with greater vigilance.

To add to his other trials his amiable Master, Tapou-Tambou, whose hatred of the Chinese was unquenchable, had formed the habit of having one of them brought each day into his presence

after dinner and chastised,—as a sort of "dessert," or after-dinner coffee course! and the affection he cherished for his former Cook caused Si-Sing's turn to come around with unusual frequency!

One day, when worn out and lacerated in mind and body, he was slowly trudging along, despair seized him and he sank to the ground, where he lay under his burthen like a balky horse, refusing to stir. His companions, as they passed by, hardly bestowed a glance upon him, merely saying:

"There is another who will make a supper for the crows this evening!"

His own countrymen had never liked him, and were at no pains to help him in his extremity; the Indians had no more reason to be compassionate; a few tattered rabonas who straggled on at the extreme rear of the column, made a circle round him, prepared to enjoy the spectacle of his dying agonies; but as he seemed in no hurry to afford them this entertainment, they, one after another, ran on and left him.

There was one, however, who remained; and as her ardent gaze was fixed earnestly upon him, it seemed to Si-Sing that the look was familiar. . . .

Crossing her arms on her breast, the rabona said gravely in excellent Spanish:

"Get up, Si-Sing. It is a cowardly heart that refuses to fight to the end against misfortunes!"

The effect was electric. Si-Sing, who was more discouraged than really sick, sprang to his feet. He had recognized the Señora by her voice alone, for, otherwise, she was wholly disguised, and Tapou-Tambou himself would have passed without suspecting her, dressed as she was in the miserable rags of a rabona.

"Is it really you, Mistress?" cried he.

"Yes," said she bitterly. "Oh, to speak more truthfully, it is an unfortunate rabona, who is following Papa-Capac, as the doe follows the hunter who has taken her fawn. . . ."

"What would the Señor Bustamente say if he were to see you in such a condition?"

"It matters not. It is long since I have given

a thought to myself or my appearance. . . . I have that on my mind which makes it of no importance what my husband may think or say. . . . I must save my daughter. . . . Si-Sing, I *must* succeed! And I *will* do so or die with her!"

Si-Sing thought the latter more probable, but did not venture to express his opinion. The energy of this remarkable woman exercised an extraordinary influence upon him; and when in her thrilling voice she said:

"Si-Sing, I count on *you* to help me" . . . he did not say "No," though a host of objections were on the tip of his tongue! On the contrary, he rose in silence, picked up the luggage he had dropped, and, once more engaged in defending what he fully believed to be a hopeless cause, he followed obediently the footsteps of the Señora, who, with head erect, walked on as proud and resolute as when, in her home in Tarayaqui, she was served and honoured by all as the wife of the Engineer, Colonel Gaspard Melchoir Bustamente.

CHAPTER XVII

AT THE ENTRANCE TO THE "HOLY QUEBRADA"

THREE weeks after the events narrated, the army of Papa-Capac, having crossed without opposition the heights of Huilnacota, arrived at the entrance to the Quebrada of Cuzco.

This "quebrada" (or wild valley) begins about thirty-six miles south of the city of Cuzco. It is a series of steep, lofty crags on which the summer scatters a few flowers, but which in winter produces an impression of deadly and savage desolation.

The soil, which is of volcanic origin, still bears marks of the convulsions which have taken place there; one treads on a bed of fine ashes, which each breath of air causes to rise in blinding whirlwinds; torrents flow in the depths of vast basaltic chasms, compared to which the natural marvels of Europe seem like children's playthings; and what were once the craters of extinct volcanoes

now hold lakes whose waters no lead has ever sounded.

But these features of the quebrada are more or less common to all volcanic regions, and count for little compared with a peculiarity much more unusual and striking. I allude to the endless and extraordinary interlacement of the valleys in this portion of the Sierra.

Some are too narrow to admit of two persons walking abreast, and, looking up between the overhanging rocks, which almost meet above, one sees only a narrow strip of sky,—as if from the bottom of a well. Others, much larger, are encumbered with masses of stone, over which the waters rush in furious torrents at the season of melting snow.

All are wild, tortuous, and twisted together like a nest of serpents. The dread of losing one's way here, as in the catacombs, deprives the traveler of the pleasure he would otherwise derive from the curious objects surrounding him.

Never was a region better adapted to be a refuge for outlaws and exiles seeking shelter in its inextricable recesses.

It was here that the last defenders of Peruvian independence in the 16th Century made their final stand, and held the proud "Conquistadores" in check for a long time.

And now, behold! the "Quebrada" is waking from its long sleep of centuries. Its echoes call to each other the name of a new Inca. The Torrent asks of the Trees, which it uproots, "Have the Tyrants departed?" . . .

It was in the Quebrada of Cuzco that the ancient monarchs of Peru concealed their treasures; at least, so says Tradition; and it also tells that, far down, in the darkness of an inaccessible cavern, the old Incas, transformed to mummies, rest in tranquil repose, safe from the profanation of all invaders.

Yes, so says tradition, and white men have sought in vain to turn the legend to profit. Multitudes, armed with picks and dark lanterns, have started to explore the Quebrada in the wild hope of returning laden with the riches of the old world.

Ah, the Mummies of the Incas must have

smiled to each other in the cave where they await the eternal resurrection! . . . Not one of all those who started forth so gaily on these expeditions ever returned to tell the tale; they were like "Cassim" in the story of Ali-Baba, who went to seek the robber's cave,—and was never heard of more!

Their friends waited for them, weeks,—months,—years; they were seen no more, and expeditions of rescue found nothing but their picks and their lanterns . . . their bodies had disappeared forever.

The Quebrada of Cuzco has been faithful to the Incas whose royal feet once trod its path in triumph; it holds in its solitudes a spell, and has no mercy on the whites who dare to invade its enchanted valleys.

Pitiless to the "gold-seekers" who venture to violate its sanctity, it is kind and hospitable to the Indians who come to find refuge in its bosom. To them it opens its motherly arms,—hides them in its secret windings,—and never fails to afford them rest, health and freedom.

"O Holy Quebrada!" cried the High Priest, as the army of the Inca was about to enter its dark shadows: "Holy Quebrada! those who know you not say that you are like other mountains,—that you are but senseless stone! Let such blaspheme at their will. Those whom you have succoured in their need, know better! Voiceless and deaf to the white man who strikes you insolently with his iron, you stir, you thrill,—you live, when the footstep of an Indian sounds in your solitudes. Rejoice! O Sacred Mountains! The reign of the white man is ended, and the Inca Papa-Capac comes, like a dutiful son, to ask humbly for the Sacred Emerald confided to your care by his ancestors. If the Inca finds favour in your heart,—if his cause is just and right,—reveal to us by a sign,— an unmistakable omen,—that you have heard, and wilt grant our prayer. Oh, Holy Quebrada, behold! we kneel before thee; speak, and tell us where for three centuries thou hast hidden the sacred Stone from the greed of the Spaniard,—the sacred Emerald of the divine Manco-Capac! . . ."

CHAPTER XVIII

THE SOUL OF MANCO-CAPAC

THUS spoke Iri-Yaqui, the High Priest, at the entrance of the sacred "Quebrada of Cuzco," standing on the border of Lake Mohina, into which, in ancient times, the Indians, finding themselves conquered by the Spaniards, threw the famous "Golden Chain," eight hundred yards long, which the Inca Huayana-Capac had made to celebrate the first hair-cutting of his eldest son, Huascar.

Thus spoke Iri-Yaqui, and the people listened to him in silence, devoutly kneeling, while the Inca Papa-Capac, sanding erect, as he alone was privileged by birth and rank to do, reverently bowed his head.

And the "Quebrada" heard his prayer.

As he ended his invocation, a cloud,—coming none could see from where,—appeared in the bright skies, and interposed its form between the earth and the Sun.

At the same moment a shadow passed over the Lake, where it is said the great links of the "Golden Chain" can still be seen glittering, coiled in the depths like a gigantic boa.

The cloud was at such a prodigious height that it was impossible to distinguish its shape with accuracy. And for the same reason it appeared as if motionless, although in reality it was descending from on high with a lightning-like speed.

As it drew near its outline grew distinct, and its size was seen to be gigantic.

That which at a distance had seemed to be a cloud was none other than a monstrous bird of prey, whose tremendous outspread wings seemed vast enough to overshadow the entire Indian army.

The creature descended to within about fifty yards of the earth, and then, arresting its flight, it poised itself, majestic and powerful, directly above the litter in which Candida was reclining.

The bird could now be observed distinctly. It was a Royal Condor of extraordinary size. The

fabulous "Roc" of the Arabian Tales, reputed able to lift and carry off a rhinoceros in its talons, is not more formidable.

No omen could be more favourable to the Indians than this apparition of the Royal Condor, —the sacred emblem of their Incas, who alone were permitted to indulge in hunting it, and whose souls after death were believed to be frequently incarnated in these giants of the Sierras.

The Condor rarely quits the region of eternal snow; only a mandate from the Gods themselves could have dispatched this one from his inaccessible haunts, where throughout the year he reigns with his brothers, amid storms and avalanches.

Adroit in forming auguries from the flight of birds, the High Priest triumphantly addressed the people.

"Children of Inti-Churi," cried he: "the Holy Quebrada has heard my prayer! The Soul of Manco-Capac has appeared in the heavens, and claims the human sacrifice promised to him. See, how he hovers over the young white maiden

whom fate has chosen for the victim. Woe! woe to him who dare defraud him of his prey! Inca, the time to go forward has arrived. . . . The path to the sacred Emerald is open! . . ."

Filled with savage exultation, his long hair falling over his black robe, he pointed to the colossal bird, brooding over its victim.

As he finished speaking the Royal Condor flapped his huge wings, and slowly resumed his flight; but this time he soared straight onward,—without increasing the distance which separated him from the earth.

And now Papa-Capac, seized in his turn by the religious enthusiasm, which illuminated the wrinkled face of Iri-Yaqui, raised his golden mace with a gesture of command; the trumpets sounded; the bearers of Candida's litter sprang forward, followed by the Priestesses of the Sun, who now never left the young girl; the body-guard surrounding the Inca moved next, and all the numerous companies of which the army was composed took up the march, with a blind confidence of arriving at the destination, as yet un-

known, to which they were being conducted by the Soul of Manco-Capac, incarnated in the Royal Condor.

CHAPTER XIX

THE EVE OF THE SACRIFICE

On! on! through the wild and unknown region where is hidden the Sacred Emerald!

For three days and nights they have marched without resting; the Condor has never quitted the head of the column. But through what wild and fearful passes has he led them, and how well suited is this place of death and solitude to the sacrifice which is to be made!

Trees, which are rare in the other districts of the Sierra, are here wholly absent.

The surface of the rocks, swept bare by the action of torrents, has lost almost all of the soil which once covered them, and only a few stunted plants grow here and there on the sides of the abysses.

Where are they going? God alone knows! The depth of the ravines, through which they are obliged to march in single file, is terrifying; and

the oldest and most daring mountaineers scarcely dare to raise their eyes from their foothold to the sky, where, far ahead, the Condor appears like a black spot.

Some of these gorges are cut in the rock to such immense depths that the loftiest peaks of the Pyrenees could be entirely hidden in them. And a handful of resolute men could hold in check an army, which they could destroy by loosening and hurling down on it the overhanging masses of stone.

No such fear disturbed Iri-Yaqui and his Indians; they have faith in the protection of the Quebrada, and this desolate, burnt-up country is to them the entrance to the "promised land."

On! On! to the fearful region where is hidden the Sacred Emerald!

Each step brings Papa-Capac nearer to the jewel on which his fortune depends; and each step brings Candida nearer to death.

The fourth day of the journey was drawing to a close when, at last, the Condor, soaring at the head of the army, paused.

The majestic bird, who, since their departure from Lake Mohina, had never stopped to rest, now alighted on the pinnacle of a tall crag. Three times he flapped his monstrous wings, sending a chill wind down to the faces of the Indians. Then he became motionless; not a tremor stirred his great form; his round eyes, speckled with gold, gazed fixedly off into space; he might have been taken for a huge effigy in bronze, the work of some unknown artist. . . .

The place chosen for the halt was dark and forbidding. It was an open space buried in the shadows of high mountains which encircled it.

A large block of porphyry rose in the centre; and all who looked on it knew it at once as the "Stone of Sacrifice."

Iri-Yaqui, after consulting the oracles, pronounced the fatal decree; Candida had but one more night to live; she must die the following day at the moment when Inti-Churi, at his zenith, should strike his rays upon the Stone of Sacrifice.

The arrangements for the night were soon

made, and all awaited the coming of the great day. Camped with no attempt at order,—some even in the dried bed of streams,—the Indians lighted great fires, and, warmly wrapped in their ponchos, spent the night in gambling and drinking "chica."

From his lofty perch, the Royal Condor, mute and unmoving, watched over the camp.

The shadows of the Indians, immeasurably magnified, were reflected by the fire-light on the smooth, rocky walls of the mountain. In a spot a little removed could be heard the murmuring voices of the gentle Priestesses of the Sun, who were spending the night with Candida, and striving tenderly to cheer and support her last hours. These poor young girls, kind, but ignorant, had not the audacity to rebel against the sentence of the High Priest; they did better,—they wept for the victim, and she, who retained her composure, was obliged to console them. Yet it was a comfort to her loving heart to know that she was not to die abandoned and unmourned, and that there were those among the

people who were sacrificing her to their bloody superstition who would weep for her, and cherish her memory.

Towards midnight the Priestesses, one after another, fell asleep, and she herself, worn out, sank to slumber beside the embers of the fire.

She had not been long asleep,—as she saw later by the not yet burned-out faggots,—when she felt a light touch on her shoulder, and a well-known voice whispered tenderly:

"My daughter . . ."

She rose quickly, and was about to speak when the little hand, firm and slender, of Donna Bustamente was pressed on her lips. At this, without further movement, for fear of attracting attention, she merely raised her eyes and looked at her mother by the dim light of the fire. As she did so her heart sank, and tears rushed to her eyes. Oh! how her mother had changed! How anguish had hollowed her temples and dimmed her eyes; she had thrown a coarse shawl over her head, and some locks of hair escaped from beneath it,—those beautiful tresses, so black, so

lustrous, of which the Señora had been so proud, —were gray. But what most pained the child was the expression of utter despair, which marked the face once so proud and handsome.

"Mother, oh, poor Mother!" sobbed she.

"Be still, child, and listen," said Maria Bustamente in a low voice, with her accustomed brief, firm manner. "For three weeks I have watched over you, hidden and mingled with that vile crew of slaves and rabonas . . . Oh, shame and misery! . . . But, no matter! For your sake I would go to the gates of the infernal regions. No one has recognized me in this disguise of an Indian woman,—no one but Si-Sing!"

"Good old Si-Sing!" murmured Candida, recalling for a moment the major-domo. . . .

"Twenty times we have tried, Si-Sing and I, to carry you off. But the wretches keep close guard, and we had to give it up. But there is no longer any possibility of delay . . . and tomorrow will see our triumph or the death of both of us. If I succeed, there are those here who will have a fearful reckoning to pay!"

"Mother! . . . Oh, Mother! . . ." pleaded the young girl.

"Silence! I think I hear some one stirring. . . . No; all is still. Listen, for time presses. Do not be afraid, my own darling! We will save you tomorrow. If there were but just ourselves,—if Si-Sing and I were alone, we would be powerless. But our former Chinese soldiers, who were taken prisoners by these scoundrels, are weary of blows and hunger. I have talked with them, and have encouraged them to hope, and they have promised once more to fight for me and mine. Inferior as they are in numbers, despair will give us the victory."

Here, restless, and turning her haggard glance towards the shadows, where the young priestesses slept beside the dying fires, the Señora stopped for a moment, then clasping her daughter passionately to her bosom, she continued:

"If I could have fled with you without risking a battle, oh! be sure I would have done so. But, although every night since we entered this horrible desert I have hung about your litter till

morning, no chance has offered. Now the die is cast,—it must be a battle. And I must, like a man, fight for my life, and what is a thousand times dearer to me than life. . . . Poor child! You are little and frail for the part we have to play,—and the life we have had to face! Oh, cursed, cursed Peru! . . . I have found nothing but misery on your soil,—nothing but treachery and cruelty!"

"Mama! do not say so! It is the country of dear Papa, and is it not also the country of your own Candida!"

"You are right. Anyway, laments are vain,—the wind carries them off. One word more before I go. Be ready for anything. Try to keep cool, and hide this stiletto in your breast; even in your little hands it may be serviceable. But I think the shadows are growing less black; a little light begins to show in the sky. Courage, my child! . . . Courage,—and farewell!"

Candida held out her arms to embrace her mother once more,—but she had vanished. Stepping noiselessly over the sleeping Indians, she re-

joined Si-Sing to prepare for the uprising, of which Tapou-Tambou had no suspicion, as he lay sleeping like a log.

CHAPTER XX

POOR CANDIDA!

THE morning, which dawned radiant and serene, found the Royal Condor in his place.

Facing the Sun, the mysterious bird fixed his savage eyes, without blinking, upon its brilliant orb. Motionless, and never stirring, he saw, without appearing to notice, the preparations for the sacrifice that were being made below.

The priests of the Sun, led by Iri-Yaqui in person, made the rounds of the fatal stone three times, chanting a wild and solemn hymn. Each then placed a tress of his hair upon the altar, and their example was followed by all the nobles, beginning with Papa-Capac, whose livid face and burning eyes betrayed his mental suffering.

A black lamb of six months, which was marked by a white star on its forehead, was next led before the High Priest. It was observed as a favourable omen that it made no resistance, but sank

on the ground upon its knees of its own accord.

A single blow of the hatchet terminated its existence. Its entrails, thrown on a blazing fire, crackled and emitted sparks, which were closely scrutinized by Iri-Yaqui.

When all was consumed, he seemed satisfied, and ordered the principal organs of the animal to be placed before him. This done, he knelt and prayed for a long time in the midst of a respectful silence, and when he at last rose his face was radiant.

"Inca," cried he, "rejoice! Inti-Churi favours thee! Hear what the Gods reveal by my voice! This block of porphyry conceals the entrance to the Cavern where are interred the Incas, thy Ancestors; and thou shalt learn by the mouth of Manco-Capac himself the spot where lies the sacred Emerald."

"Dost thou say so, Priest? . . . Then the sacrifice of Candida is needless!"

"My Son," replied Iri-Yaqui, "the learning of the whites blinds thee. No human strength will avail to move that stone, which you look upon

so disdainfully; but it will of itself move aside, and make way for the descendant of Manco-Capac as soon as it is moistened with the blood of the victim."

"Imbecile superstition!" exclaimed the Inca violently.

"Blaspheme if you will. . . . But make the trial," replied the High Priest with calmness; "the words of man will not prevail against the decrees of the Eternal!"

"Here, guards!" commanded the Inca: "see that the people bring spades and picks, and dig the ground about this stone."

Soon an army of Indians were engaged in turning up the soil; but each effort seemed to settle it more firmly in its resting place; and after an hour of work by one hundred men the stone had not been dislodged by so much as a hair's breadth.

"Go, bring ropes and harness all our mules!" said the Inca.

He was obeyed; but the mules accomplished no more than had been achieved by the men.

Iri-Yaqui smiled; the Inca was furious:

"If I can not move it,—I will blow it up!" shouted he.

Then, full of confidence in his efforts to save his God-child, he ordered every soldier to bring what powder he had, and gave directions to lay mines under the corners of the stone.

When all was in readiness, the fuse was fired; a terrific explosion followed, which caused everyone to recoil. When the smoke cleared away, they saw, with amazement, that the block of porphyry had not stirred. It stood as firm as before, not even a mark of injury could be seen on its smooth, polished surface. . . .

The trial was conclusive. Iri-Yaqui, calm and triumphant, pointed to the Sun, whose rays touched the edge of the mountain:

"The Hour has come!" said he.

Immediately a tumultuous blare of trumpets, horns and drums burst forth. The sounds were intended to drown the shrieks of the victim, but in this instance were unnecessary.

She came forward slowly; pale, but without fear. She gently motioned aside the Priestesses

of the Sun, who had advanced to assist and sustain her. She had dressed for the last time in a simple robe of white, which fell in folds down to her little bare feet, and her beautiful hair flowed in waves of gold over her shoulders. So gentle and resigned was she that it had not been deemed necessary to bind her arms.

When arrived at the place of execution, she, for the first time, raised her eyes,—the beautiful emerald eyes, which had been so largely the cause of her destruction! . . . and, looking down at the crowd about her, she said with a heavenly smile that drew tears from all who were near enough to see it:

"I forgive you all for my death; may you live free and happy, in our dear Country!"

Then, having glanced with unspeakable sadness towards Papa-Capac, who hid his face in his hands, she knelt before the High Priest, saying:

"I am ready, Señor: do with me as you please."

But it was not the part of the High Priest to consummate the bloody tragedy. The rites of

the ancient religion of Peru placed this horrible obligation upon the Inca, and Papa-Capac, recalled to his duty by Iri-Yaqui, took the sacred knife in his trembling hand.

On seeing him approach, the young girl, who had lain down upon the altar of sacrifice, raised herself slightly, and said in that soft, gentle voice, which had been once the sweetest music to him, and was now the most horrible condemnation:

"Poor God-father! . . . Is it *you* who have to kill me?"

The simple words suffocated him, tears rushed to his eyes,—and, staggering like a drunken man,—he cried:

"No! No!—*I cannot kill thee!*"

At this moment shouts broke forth among the crowd; pistol shots were heard; a bullet, fired by Si-Sing, whizzed past the ear of Tapou-Tambou; a rabona, who was not at first recognized as the Señora, bounded like a tigress onto the stone of sacrifice, and struck madly with her dagger at the High Priest. Iri-Yaqui tottered,—and sank to the ground.

An indescribable tumult and confusion ensued, in the midst of which little Candida swooned where she lay on the Altar. Papa-Capac, crouched in a corner, seemed dazed; while the High Priest, whom some of his faithful followers vainly attempted to succour, expired at the feet of the intrepid mother whose adored child he had schemed to destroy.

Surprised for a moment, the Indians were quick to perceive the small numbers of their assailants, and, led by Tapou-Tambou, they fought fiercely and well. Si-Sing, on his part, performed prodigies of valour. The fat major-domo had grown wonderfully thin, owing to his many misfortunes, and he laid about him, right and left among his former employees, accompanying his blows by remarks that would have astonished Confucius. . . . For some time the battle continued, without apparent advantage to either side. The narrowness of the valley was greatly in favour of Donna Bustamente; and a goodly number of Indians, observing the inaction of Papa-Capac, were looking about for some means

of retreat,—when, suddenly, the combatants felt the *earth tremble under their feet.* In an instant all around them seemed to be moving! The ground on which they stood opened in long, yawning chasms. The mountains rocked on their foundations, and split in monstrous crevasses, with fearful noises. The "Quebrada" seemed on the point of crumbling away! . . . Great masses of rock, detached from the summits, fell like fragments of ill-constructed walls. Far off could be heard the roar of torrents, bursting forth from subterranean abysses, and rushing onward with terrifying swiftness . . . and the earth, convulsed by a series of unequal shocks, resembling the laboured throbbings of a diseased heart, —seemed as if struggling to rid itself of the miserable creatures contending for its possession!

In such an appalling upheaval of nature both the Chinese and the Indians stopped, terror-stricken; blinded by a dense darkness, which suddenly covered the valley, they were unable even to see each other.

In the obscurity Donna Bustamente shrieked

the name of her daughter, in vain,—she obtained no answer; Si-Sing roared in Chinese; the Indians yelled in quicha,—and in the confusion and panic all thought of fighting was abandoned.

All at once the earthquake shocks ceased; the dark mist, which had shrouded the face of the sun, cleared away; the fog lifted, and in the bright space of sky now visible, the Royal Condor was seen, soaring aloft, clutching in his mighty talons the unconscious form of the young girl.

CHAPTER XXI

RESCUED BY PAPA-CAPAC

THE bird soared slowly and majestically upward, and the young girl, whose golden hair glittered in the sunlight, made no effort to release herself.

Should the Condor reach the upper peaks of the Sierra, hidden in the clouds,—Candida was lost forever.

But such did not seem to be his intention; disdaining the shots aimed at him (which Donna Bustamente at once ordered to cease), he bore his prey to the crag, which he had quitted a few moments before.

The earth-shocks, which for a brief interval had ceased, now recommenced with increased violence; the Indians, appalled at what they believed to be the expression of divine displeasure, fled in all directions; Tapou-Tambou, who feared no living man, lay prostrate, his face on

the ground, in supplication to Inti-Churi, while Donna Bustamente, completely overcome by this last blow of fate, abandoned herself to despair.

Papa-Capac alone retained his presence of mind. The fearful peril of his God-child aroused him from the stupor in which he, for a few moments, had been plunged. He did not hesitate for an instant, but seizing a bow and arrow from the grasp of a dead Indian, he sprang forward, alert and agile, prepared to ascend the mountain.

The attempt to scale such a stupendous wall of rock as confronted him, smooth as glass, and more than three hundred feet high, would, in ordinary times, have seemed the act of a madman.

But the earthquake had shaken the prodigious mass of rock, and had opened, here and there, fissures that might afford a foothold. Raised in the Sierra, accustomed in early youth to risk his life with the young shepherds on the most perilous slopes of the Crucero, and possessing the cool head and steady nerve of an accomplished mountaineer, a rest for the tip of his foot was all that Papa-Capac would require.

Those who watched him from below, ascending with assured and even strides, forgot for the moment their own danger, so incredible and superhuman did the undertaking seem to them.

But there was a sentiment, which, known only to himself, inspired the Inca; awakened from the dreams of ambition, which had blinded him, he saw with terrible clearness the sins of his past,—and with equal clearness he resolved to atone for them.

Executioner,—assassin, less from cruelty than from weakness, the hour of expiation for him had struck!

When at last he attained the summit of the gigantic wall, he was careful not to permit himself to be visible. Stretched on the ground behind a rampart of rock, he warily thrust forward his head, and looked. . . .

The sight which met his eyes almost unnerved him. The monstrous bird stood, towering its full height, above the body of his victim, and his enormous wings, like the sails of a vessel, were spread out over Candida, who lay wholly uncon-

scious of the monster who held her in his clutches.

The jagged points of the rock had wounded her delicate temples, and a slender stream of blood was trickling and staining the gold of her hair.

At the sight of the innocent child whom he had so wronged, and whose pitiable position was the result of his own acts, Papa-Capac felt more keenly than ever the stab of remorse. . . . He seized an arrow, fitted it hastily on the bow-string, and took aim. The whole front of the Condor was exposed, and offered an excellent target. The arrow whistled through the air, and struck, with its sharp point of stone, right on the breast of the bird. He uttered a loud, hoarse cry that awoke Candida; and when she saw the great eyes of yellow fire, and the terrible beak of steel bending over her, she also shrieked,—a cry of supreme agony and terror. And, as if the spirit of her old Corsican ancestors had at last stirred within her, she struck at the creature with all her strength, using the stiletto, which her mother had given to her.

The attack was so sudden, and so unexpected, that the Condor was startled, and drew back a short distance; this gave Papa-Capac time to rush forward, and sheltering the young girl in his arms, he took from her the dagger, and stood ready to defend her from any further attack of her enemy.

It was unnecessary. The giant bird of the Sierra, whose blood in falling had mingled with that of Candida on the rocky crag, uttered once more a scream that was heard for miles, and then, flapping his wings, he slowly sailed away, and disappeared in the dark recesses of the Quebrada.

CHAPTER XXII

THE MYSTERIOUS STAIRWAY

CANDIDA'S wound, though it had bled freely, was, in reality, very slight, and in no way dangerous. She threw herself joyfully into the arms of her God-father, and thanked him with the most loving words for having saved her life. Their first thought was to go in search of the Señora Bustamente, but what was their astonishment to perceive exactly on the spot upon which the blood of the young girl had fallen, and mixed with that of the Royal Bird, an opening in the rock, which certainly had not been visible a few moments before! It was circular in shape, and large enough to admit of the passage of a man, and Papa-Capac, on bending over to examine it, discovered the upper portion of a staircase, which seemed to descend in a spiral, downwards into the bowels of the earth.

Instantly the old predictions of Iri-Yaqui, in

regard to the sprinkling of the victim's blood, recurred to his memory, and he did not doubt for a moment that he had before his eyes the entrance to the burial chamber, where, by the all-powerful decree of Inti-Churi, the Imperial Emerald had been hidden for centuries, together with the mummies of his ancestors, the Incas.

An ardent curiosity seized him to explore to its depths this dwelling-place of the dead, and the ambitions which he believed himself in good faith to have renounced, resumed immediately all their former empire over his feeble and vacillating soul.

Taking the hand of his God-child, he drew her at once to the entrance, and as she made no resistance, they began the descent of the abyss so strangely opened at their feet by a supernatural power.

They proceeded slowly, and the pale light from above grew more and more uncertain as they continued; the steps were too narrow to allow them to walk together, and the Inca, who went first, turned from time to time to reassure his little companion.

She appeared to have forgotten the past, and replied by a gentle smile, which seemed to say, "What have I to fear, now that I am once more in your care?"

So little was she disturbed by anxiety that she amused herself by counting the steps. At each hundred she clapped her hands in child-like glee, and was rather disappointed when, at the three hundredth step, the stairs ended.

Here they found themselves in a vast cavern, in the form of a star, which, as soon as they entered, ceased to be dark, and was lighted up instantly by a soft radiance, which did not seem to issue from any one point, but to be generally diffused, and was of so lovely a character that it appeared to caress the sight, rather than dazzle it!

"Oh! where are we, God-father? . . . What is this place?" asked the young girl in awe-struck tones. But the Inca was no wiser than the child.

The cavern was a sort of centre, from which radiated nine arched passageways or tunnels, such as in former ages were pierced by the Incas in their Gold-mines.

These nine gloomy openings, gaping like dark mouths, before them, filled with strange, menacing shadows, seemed to Papa-Capac to threaten new and mysterious perils, and he determined to push his investigations no further, but to retrace his steps at once, and return to the upper world.

But he found this was not the easy matter he had supposed it to be! A fresh convulsion of nature had evidently taken place, and the opening through which they had descended had disappeared in a series of subterranean shocks, the echoes of which resounded through the cavern. All return to the surface of the earth by their original path was impossible.

Papa-Capac was horrified; not for himself, for he had long since ceased to consider his personal safety,—but for the unfortunate child, who, after escaping so many dangers, was now to be enclosed in this living tomb! . . .

He strove, however, not to abandon hope entirely. He must spare no effort to save Candida, and if, as he suspected, they were at this moment in an ancient and unused mine, some one of the

many tunnels would surely lead them back to the outside world. But which one? How was he to ascertain which of the nine passages would prove the lucky one?

CHAPTER XXIII

THE SUBTERRANEAN TEMPLE AND THE SACRED EMERALD

As he hesitated, perplexed, and holding the little girl's trembling hand in his, he noticed a faint gleam of light, far off, in the depths of one of the corridors. At first it was only a dim, uncertain illumination; but in a few seconds it shone out brilliantly, like an arc light, and flooded all the gallery with its radiance.

Here was safety! The Inca, hurrying the young girl with him, plunged hastily in this direction; and, after walking a distance of about fifteen hundred feet, a marvelous sight met their eyes.

Imagine hidden in the bowls of the earth a Hall of colossal magnitude,—larger and loftier than the grandest of our cathedrals. No columns intercepted the view or restricted it in any direction. No windows broke the immense surface of the walls, which upheld the massive edifice. No

small, trivial details were to be seen anywhere, no graceful ornamentation,—but everywhere a majestic construction,—vast and stupendous,—giving an impression of eternal duration.

At the distant end of the Hall shone a gigantic Sun, whose rays, fashioned of the purest gold, emitted a dazzling splendour.

In the interstices of the huge blocks of which the walls were composed, there sparkled rows upon rows of precious stones, which caught and reflected the effulgence of the golden Sun, and their innumerable lines seemed to run in rivers of fire down to the pavement of rare onyx studded with diamonds.

This was the burial chamber, or vault, of the ancient Incas. It was here that they rested in state, under the eye of their Father, Manco-Capac,—"Child of the Sun," the first of the line of Incas who had reigned over Peru.

They are all there, seated in two ranks, opposite each other along the walls. Their bodies have not been insulted by enclosure in coffins of wood or stone; such as they were in life, such they

are today; seated on tall thrones of rare woods inlaid with pearl or ivory; they hold in their right hand a golden sceptre set with rubies and amethysts; a mask of gold conceals their features; their mouths are slightly open, and if their eyes were not hidden by the plate of gold placed upon them by the embalmer, one would imagine they were about to speak.

Behind each one stands a portrait statue of gold, in natural size, and striking in its resemblance to the seated sovereign, over whom it seems to watch with solicitude.

Between these statues and the wall is a deep recess occupied by other figures, also seated, but less richly embalmed; these are the relatives, the friends, the faithful followers, and favoured servants of the monarch. Each is accompanied by an emblem of the functions which he performed when on earth. The bankers hold in their hands coffers of gold pieces; the peasants bear sheaves of the harvest; the warriors brandish the weapons of gold and silver with which they dispatched their enemies.

Surrounded by this unheard-of magnificence, —in the midst of an illumination so dazzling that the eye aches and would seek shelter,—it is yet the mortal remains of the illustrious Manco-Capac that chiefly impresses and rivets the attention.

Tall and straight, and firm as when in life, he sits beneath the Sun on his golden throne, whence he dominates the assembly; his feet rest on a footstool of chiselled silver. A robe of brocade envelopes his limbs, an aigrette of diamonds glitters in his long hair, and his eyes burn like those of a panther in the darkness, behind the golden mask which covers his face.

On his left, slightly in the rear of the throne, his wife, Mama Oello-Huaco, stands in an attitude of respectful attention. A long golden pin with a diamond head confines her hair, gathered in a knot at the nape of the neck; with one hand she holds the folds of her silken robe, and in the other she carries a fan with feathers and sticks of gold, wherewith to brush away any audacious insect which might dare to approach the face of her august spouse and master.

It was impossible to behold without awe this spectacle, till now unseen by human eye. Advancing through the cortege, which crowded with its various personages the steps of the throne, Papa-Capac threw himself at the feet of his Ancestor.

"O my sovereign Father and Lord," cried he: "behold me! prostrate before thee, with this young girl, whom the Priest of the Sun was about to immolate, and who was saved by the interposition of heaven in a miraculous manner. If a human victim is required, I offer myself, in expiation of the sins of my race; take my life,—accept it in place of hers. But, oh, great King! if I must die for my people, I, the last representative of thy august family,—grant at least my one, last prayer, before I take my place here with my ancestors! Grant that, like them, I may wear upon my breast the Sacred Emerald! That thus I may be,—if only for a moment,—thy true and rightful Successor on the throne of Peru!"

As he finished speaking, lightning-like flames flashed forth from the golden Sun, bathing the

person of the dead monarch with overpowering splendour, in the midst of which the majestic figure was seen to slowly bend its august head.

Papa-Capac, then taking the cold and shrinking fingers of the child in his own, led her to the foot of the throne. The fiery beams of the Sun glistened in myriad reflections on her golden hair, and her beautiful, wide-opened eyes shone like two living emeralds!

Full of pity for her unhappy God-father, she conquered the repugnance and horror, which she felt in approaching the dead Emperor. And in accordance with the ancient custom of Peru, she, as a suppliant, reached up and touched the chin of the monarch, a gesture which was supposed to imply a desire for his protection and favour.

At her touch the jaws separated in a frightful grin, and on the withered and protruding tongue appeared the Sacred Emerald!

CHAPTER XXIV

THE SUPREME EXPIATION

INTOXICATED with joy, Papa-Capac seized the jewel with a cry of triumph, and at once attached it to the golden chain which hung around his neck. But at the same instant a fearful clap of thunder rent in two the roof of the edifice; the heavy walls, shaken by tremendous earth-shocks, tottered on their foundations; the golden Sun was extinguished, and Papa-Capac and his God-child were lifted from the ground by a furious blast of wind, and carried,—they knew not how, —outside the royal Necropolis.

It required some moments for them to collect their senses, and examine the spot to which they had been transported.

Alas! . . . Cruel as had been their previous sufferings, they were as nothing to the hideous reality that now confronted them.

Following these last earth-shocks, they found themselves isolated on a narrow pinnacle of rock, scarcely large enough to contain them. The peak, which afforded them a bare foothold, issued from the depths of a gigantic crevasse, which looked as if it might have been cut by a knife in the heart of the mountain, so smooth and even were its sides, and so free from seams or fissures.

Three hundred feet above them floated a strip of blue sky, barely visible between the steep walls of the gorge; beneath them the white spray of boiling torrents rose continually in vast clouds.

On the side of the mountain itself there was no chance of escape; the narrow space on which they stood, huddled together and afraid to move, had no doubt at some former time formed part of an entrance to one of those subterranean galleries, or "Chinganas," excavated by the ancient Peruvians on the flanks of the "cerros" or peaks, for the purpose of concealing their dead.

But the opening to the Chingana was now



INTOXICATED WITH JOY, PAPA-CAPAC SEIZED THE JEWEL WITH A CRY OF TRIUMPH

blocked by enormous boulders, and these huge obstacles rendered flight in that direction impossible.

They must die. Little Candida, exhausted by fatigue and lack of food, had not sufficient strength left to comprehend clearly their situation. She had sunk down on the verge of the rock, her feet hanging listlessly over the abyss, and half unconsciously was singing to herself a little lullaby with which her mother used to put her to sleep. It was the lament of a Corsican child lost in the "maquis," who was about to perish when found by its parents.

Papa-Capac realized more fully their position, and, in consequence, his sufferings were more acute. The fatal Emerald had surely not brought him good fortune!

At times a ray of hope brightened him for a moment; at others he gazed fixedly down in the gulf, whose fearful depths seemed to have a dreadful attraction.

A day passed. Hunger had ceased to distress Candida, but she was thirsty, and cried quietly

to herself all night; the sound of her subdued weeping went to the heart of the Inca, who more than once leaned towards the brink of the precipice, with an impulse to put an end to the useless reproaches of his conscience.

At last the day dawned. The blue sky, which seemed to promise deliverance, shone brightly overhead, while below the floods in the ravine roared with an ominous sound.

Gentle in death as she had been in life, Candida made no complaints; and her silence was more distressing to the Inca than her tears had been.

When the sun had reached its zenith, and its rays were sending golden shafts into the dark caverns below, Papa-Capac thought his little God-child's last hour had arrived.

With closed eyes, as if in a dream, and with a mysterious, ecstatic expression upon her lovely face, she was murmuring strange, incoherent words.

"They are coming; I see them. It is Mama who is guiding them. Oh! how she hurries,

dear Mama! Papa is with them, too. They have long ropes, and long, long cords,—but will they be long enough? Mama says 'no—they must go and get others.' 'Will they be back in time?' says Papa. Dear Papa . . . dear Mama! How glad I will be to be with them once more!"

A sort of swoon followed this dreamy condition; but the child was not dying, for she seemed to breathe easily. At the end of an hour she suddenly awoke from sleep, and opening her eyes very widely, cried out:

"God-father! . . . God-father! . . . Be ready! Papa and Mama are coming to find us!"

The Inca sighed sadly; but as he raised his eyes to the opening above, he caught sight of the figures of men working rapidly and feverishly. Soon a beam was thrown across the chasm, and a rope suspended from it. At the same time he detected the sound of voices, to which he responded by loud shouts.

So,—after all,—Candida was right, and help was at hand! Hunger, thirst, fatigue, were all forgotten! The blood once more coursed

through his veins, and he thought only of deliverance.

It was slow in coming. At last, about four o'clock in the afternoon, an immense rope came slowly down, and, securely fastened to it by the arm-pits, his feet solidly supported by wooden braces, was Si-Sing.

The Señora Bustamente, who was above with her husband, had herself desired to make this dangerous descent, but Si-Sing, whose courage knew no bounds, pleaded for the privilege. He was inclined to repent somewhat of his rashness when about half way down the frightful chasm, but the joy of the little girl on seeing him quite reconciled him to the perils he had encountered.

When, not without difficulty, he had landed upon the little island of rock occupied by the refugees, he gave a grunt of satisfaction.

Confucius says, "*None but a fool will descend to the bottom of a gulf if he can remain on firm ground!*" . . . and, as usual, Si-Sing shared, at least in theory, the views of the eminent philosopher.



SOON A BEAM WAS THROWN ACROSS THE CHASM, AND A ROPE SUSPENDED FROM IT

It was indeed a hazardous excursion that Candida was about to make with her old Si-Sing; but when she remembered that her Papa and Mama were waiting for her up above, she hesitated no longer, and, tightly strapped to Si-Sing, she commenced the ascent.

Papa-Capac was left, for the present, as the rope was not thought capable of sustaining the weight of three persons.

With what precautions did the rescuers work at their task! One false or careless movement might cause a catastrophe! But at last Si-Sing and his little charge reached in safety the light of day, and Candida fell, weeping with joy, into the arms of her parents. Her misfortunes were ended!

Already the shadows of twilight were creeping with their violet veils through the Sierra, and the darkness of midnight already reigned in the depths of the gorge where the Inca remained alone, waiting patiently for rescue. In the darkness and silence he had time to review his past with its sins and its failures, its weakness and

inability to adhere to the good resolutions, which from time to time he had formed, only to abandon them at the first impulse of temptation. Even the prospect of safety could scarcely be contemplated without anguish; for he was only too well aware that, Inca as he was, and possessed at last of the Sacred Emerald, he would at once upon reaching the summit where his deliverers were at work be regarded by them only as a common rebel. How could he find strength to support the humiliations in store for him, and the hardships reserved for his unfortunate people?

But the instinct of life is strong, and he resolved to grasp firmly the cord which was now being lowered to him.

The strain of the pull upward was long and severe. When within about sixty feet of the opening, those who were leaning over and lighting up the dark abyss with torches, beheld his features suddenly become convulsed,—and then rigid. A gigantic Bird, whose huge wings could hardly find room to spread themselves in the narrow gorge, was seen to rush upon the Inca with

outstretched beak. By the wild glare of the torches, Papa-Capac had recognized it . . . it it was the *Royal Condor*.

In helpless terror, he clutched the rope to keep himself from falling, while those above, in frantic haste, redoubled their efforts. It was in vain. The Bird, executor of the Gods' decrees, pounced on the unfortunate monarch, and transfixed him with its fierce claws. With one blow he splintered the Sacred Emerald, and drove his iron beak deep into the heart of the Inca.

Papa-Capac relaxed his hold upon the rope, and fell like an arrow more than a thousand feet, down, onto the rocky bed of the boiling waters below. The life of the last Inca was ended.

EPILOGUE

A FEW words will suffice to relate what had happened. The Peruvian Government, on being informed of the conspiracy and rebellion of the Inca, Papa-Capac, at once despatched troops to quell the disturbance, and disperse the rebels. Colonel Bustamente, in consequence of his familiarity of the Sierra, was placed in command of the force.

He arrived just in time to complete the work of punishment, so well begun by his wife. It is easy to imagine his distress on learning of the disappearance of his idolized little daughter.

In desperation, he searched the mountains for two days and nights, exploring every nook and crevasse of the Quebrada; and it was finally owing to the assistance of Si-Sing's keen slant eyes that the little girl was discovered more than five leagues distant from the locality where she had come so near falling a victim to the ancient Gods of Peru!

We know the rest. The two principal leaders of the revolt, Iri-Yaqui and Papa-Capac, being dead, it was thought not only unnecessary, but under the circumstances, undesirable, to deal harshly with the subordinates. Harrassed by Ch̤ili, her Capital menaced, Peru certainly needed to preserve peace and quiet within her own border; the rebellion was, therefore, kept secret, and so strict was the censorship of the Government that not a newspaper in Europe learned of the events we have narrated.

Some of the Indians, who had followed Papa-Capac, were allowed to drift quietly back to their villages in the remote fastnesses of the mountains, and others were received back into the yards and workshops where they had formerly been employed.

The gentle Tapou-Tambou, ex-grand judge and ex-general of the Indian army, found himself compelled, much against his will, to once more take up his pick and shovel. . . . At present, the work being completed and the road in operation, he is conductor on a train,—a con-

genial position, which enables him to hustle and insult the passengers who for the moment chance to be at his mercy.

Colonel Bustamente kept the promise made by his wife to the Chinese; all the survivors of the great war were restored to their own country, with the exception of Chao-Tung, who remained in Tarayaqui, and was employed by the town as a street-sweeper.

Si-Sing refused to leave his employers. He had become, as it were, a member of the family, and accompanied them to Europe.

The Señora Bustamente had acquired a horror of the Sierra,—a feeling that was fully shared by her daughter. They now live in Paris, where Colonel Bustamente, who has resigned his commission in the Peruvian army, is able to pursue the scientific studies of which he is so fond.

Candida is now a young lady. Tall, slender and graceful, always gentle and charming in manner, her beautiful eyes and her superb golden hair create a sensation wherever she appears. She has retained from the trials of the past a

trace of sadness, which, at times, causes anxiety to her parents. And one of her great pleasures when alone with Si-Sing is to lead the conversasation to her unfortunate God-father, the Inca.

Si-Sing, who has once more grown plump, and has recovered his umbrella and his queue, listens with gravity, shakes his head solemnly, and invariably replies by quoting his favourite Confucius:

"*Mourning will not bring a Dead Man to life*," . . . and:

"*Ancient Dynasties are like Old Trees whose roots have grown dry,—even if watered with human blood, they will not bear leaves again!*"

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
00025452562